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Federal Association of Departments for
Research and Information on Antisemitism

Annual Report

Antisemitic Incidents in Germany 2023

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Contents

4	Introduction
10	Summary
12	Antisemitic incidents in 2023
36	The October 7 massacres as an opportunity structure for antisemitic incidents
52	Statistics at a glance
58	Appendix
59	Civil-society documentation of antisemitic incidents in Germany in 2023
61	Conceptual framework and categories
65	Requirements for working as a member of the Federal Working Group (BAG) of the Bundesverband RIAS e. V.

Introduction

The number of antisemitic incidents recorded by the Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) in 2023 was almost 83 % higher than in 2022. This huge increase mostly reflects the large number of incidents that took place after the October 7 massacres in Israel: More than half of all antisemitic incidents in 2023 took place after that date. In this context, the antisemitism often expressed itself in an especially violent way. For many Jews, October 7, 2023 initiated a new era, dividing their lives into a before and an after stage. On that day, terrorists from Hamas and other Islamist terrorist organizations¹ attacked Israel from the Gaza Strip. In several massacres of the civilian population, they killed more than 1,139 people, injured more than 5,000, some severely, and abducted more than 240 people into Gaza. Simultaneously, Palestinian terror organizations shot thousands of rockets at Israel from the Gaza Strip. The dimensions of the antisemitic, genocidal and especially sexual violence involved in these attacks are far from being completely understood. Palestinian terror organizations are still holding more than 100 people as hostages; nor have they released the bodies of all those who died during the fighting. The war in Israel and Gaza continues.² Since October 7, antisemitism has become visible in all areas of German society in a way that has not been seen since the Nazi era. The negative experiences that Jews living in Germany have had for many years have intensified enormously, becoming an omnipresent, daily burden. This has directly changed both the private and the organized life of Jews in Germany: Many have withdrawn from public life and enter certain spaces with fear or constant concern of being confronted by one-sided or even hostile positions. Terror threats³ and anti-Israel demonstrations in city centers have altered both the objective security situation and the personal feeling of security of many Jews. Hamas propaganda has been spread frequently in private chat groups or on social media – sometimes without being classified as such by public-service media.⁴

1 According to research by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), five other terrorist organizations besides Hamas took part in the massacres of October 7: the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the Omar Al-Qasim Forces, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Mujahideen Brigades. See Abdelali Ragad, Richard Irvine-Brown, Benedict Garman, and Sean Seddon, "How Hamas built a force to attack Israel on 7 October," *BBC*, November 27, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67480680> (accessed on April 4, 2024).

2 In particular, Iran's first direct attack on Israel on April 13, 2024 represents a further level of escalation, which intensifies the threat situation for both the local people and for Jews worldwide. See Bradley Bowma, Ryan Brobst, and Mike Daum, "What We Can Learn From Iran's Attack On Israel," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, April 16, 2024, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/04/16/what-we-can-learn-from-irans-attack-on-israel/> (accessed on May 6, 2024).

3 See Holger Schmidt and Michael Götschenberg, "Offenbar Hamas-Anschlag in Deutschland vereitelt", *tagesschau.de*, December 14, 2023, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/gesellschaft/hamas-generalbundesanwalt-100.html> (accessed on April 26, 2024). See also Thorsten Güting and Elisabeth Kagermeier, "Mit Hamas-Bezug: Erneut Bombendrohung an Schulen in Bayern," *BR24*, October 24, 2023, <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/bayern/hamas-bezug-erneut-bombendrohung-an-schule-in-bayern,Tta4fCb> (accessed on April 26, 2024).

4 See Monika Hübscher, "Krieg der Bilder," *tageszeitung*, October 19, 2023, <https://taz.de/Nahost-Konflikt/!5963808/> (accessed on May 3, 2024). See also Marco Bertolaso, "Unser Fehler in einem 'X'-Post," *Deutschlandfunk*, October 19, 2023, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/unser-fehler-in-einem-x-post-100.html> (accessed on May 3, 2024).

The burden on Jews in Germany can clearly be seen in the work of the OFEK – Counselling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination: In the first month alone after the October 7 attacks, it recorded more requests for counseling than in any year since its founding.⁵ Much of what Jews around the world have experienced since that date cannot be reflected in this report, either because it is too commonplace or subtle to report or does not meet the RIAS’s criteria of an antisemitic incident. For example, it is an enormous psychological burden for Jews to be confronted by distorted and one-sided representations of the events of October 7. This is especially true if the Israeli victims are consistently ignored, negated or their murders justified. Mourning for the Israelis who were murdered on October 7 or remembering the hostages that are still being held is not possible in German public spaces without protection, or without eliciting hostile reactions. Yet these stressful experiences do not always fit into the RIAS criteria for antisemitic incidents.

The extent and quality of antisemitic reactions to October 7 also raise new questions for the statistical analysis of documented incidents in 2023: How can the total number of known antisemitic incidents be analyzed when more than half of them took place in the last three months of the year? What does that signify in comparison with the numbers from previous years? How can incidents that took place before October 7 and their impact on those concerned be adequately represented?

The experiences of the RIAS reporting offices show that it is above all the continuity of antisemitism that makes it something that pervasively impacts the daily lives of those affected. Therefore, it is the continuity of the antisemitic incidents before and after October 7 that must be presented.

This report, *Antisemitic Incidents in Germany 2023*, brings together the findings of various RIAS reporting offices run by civil society, which are part of the Federal Working Group (BAG) of the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (Bundesverband RIAS). The chapter “Antisemitic incidents in 2023” analyses how the number of antisemitic incidents in 2023 changed compared with the previous year – broken down according to different types of incidents, manifestations of antisemitism and political-ideological backgrounds. The impact of the Hamas massacres and the war in Gaza on antisemitic incidents in Germany is treated in the chapter titled “The October 7 massacres as an opportunity structure for antisemitic incidents”. The following chapter, “Statistics at a glance”, presents an overview of the central evaluation categories for the entire year, while the “Appendix” provides an explanation for the categories used by the RIAS reporting offices and in this report.

5 See OFEK – Counselling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination: “Ein Monat nach Angriff auf Israel,” Facebook post, November 7, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/ofekberatung/posts/pfbid0386j7u56TTY2REoBPi1XC1hn5vf4g2pnHyrZipyPk5suLx6H5YNYLLifJfAtkf9ml> (accessed on April 4, 2024).

Sources of the data

The following analyses are based on reports of antisemitic incidents by those affected or witnesses as well as on information provided to RIAS by other organizations. The reports were registered and processed either by the Bundesverband RIAS or by one of the regional RIAS reporting offices. It should be noted that whether an incident actually comes to the attention of a reporting office depends on various factors. Two important factors are the local awareness of the respective reporting office and the trust placed in that reporting office by the communities of those affected by antisemitism. This trust sometimes has to be built up over many years. The virulence of societal debates about antisemitism and resulting sensitivity to the problem also influence the reporting behavior. Finally, access to systematically analyzable sources as well as the human resources of the respective reporting offices also have an impact on whether they can, for example, proactively monitor gatherings where antisemitic incidents can be expected. In short, the extent to which different RIAS reporting offices learn of antisemitic incidents can vary.

In 2023, the RIAS reporting offices also compared data with other civil-society actors, such as OFEK or members of the Association of Counseling Centers for Victims of Right-wing, Racist and Antisemitic Violence in Germany (VBRG e.V.). Because of the heavy workload and the changed societal conditions since October 7, however, this data comparison within the reporting network could not be carried out as comprehensively as in previous years. There was also no systematic nationwide comparison with police statistics on antisemitic crimes in 2023. Such a comparison only took place in Brandenburg, Hesse and Lower Saxony. Hence antisemitic crimes only known to the police that took place in other federal states were not included in the RIAS statistics. Unfortunately, in nine federal states it was also not possible to check if incidents may have been recorded by the police as well as by civil-society reporting offices.

This year's report – like last year's – is based on data from regional reporting offices in 11 federal states. Documented incidents from the following reporting offices were taken into account: RIAS Bavaria, RIAS Berlin, RIAS Hesse, Documentation and Information Centre for Antisemitism Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (DIA.MV), RIAS Lower Saxony, RIAS North Rhine-Westphalia, Specialist Office Against Antisemitism (FgA) at the NS Documentation Center of the City of Cologne, RIAS Saarland, RIAS Saxony, RIAS Saxony-Anhalt, Documentation and Information Office on Antisemitism Schleswig-Holstein (LIDA-SH) and RIAS Thuringia. Incidents that took place in federal states in which no regional RIAS office was located in 2023 (Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg and Rhineland-Palatinate) were processed by the Bundesverband RIAS. Generally, RIAS only publishes incidents if those who report them are in agreement. The cases described

in this report represent only an exemplary selection and therefore only a fraction of the documented antisemitic incidents.

It is important to emphasize that the antisemitic incidents documented by RIAS always capture a mere fragment of a larger reality. Despite all efforts, we have to assume that there are a large number of unreported antisemitic incidents that are never registered.⁶ In addition, the RIAS reporting offices only evaluate incidents that meet the RIAS criteria for an antisemitic incident. For this and other reasons, the number of registered incidents is not statistically representative of the general population. The numbers of antisemitic incidents mentioned in this report therefore do not indicate how many people in Germany as a whole think or act in an antisemitic way. The main aim of this report is to highlight the everyday dimension of antisemitism in Germany from the perspective of those who are affected by it.

6 In the latest survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 78 % of Jewish respondents in Germany said that they had not reported the most serious antisemitic incident that they had personally experienced during the last five years to the police or any other organization. See European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU* (Vienna: 2018), 55 ff, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf (accessed on May 9, 2023).

Summary

- In 2023, the RIAS reporting offices recorded a total of 4,782 antisemitic incidents. 2,787, or 58% of these cases, occurred after October 7.
- The terror attack and massacres of October 7 provided an opportunity structure for antisemitic statements and acts in Germany. The number of antisemitic cases rose from a calculated seven incidents per day in 2022 to 13 per day in 2023. Between October 7 and the end of 2023, RIAS documented 32 incidents per day.
- Antisemitic incidents that took place after October 7 were sometimes direct reactions to the violence on that day. The war in Israel and Gaza also offered an opportunity for demonstrations and antisemitic incidents.
- RIAS was able to attribute 71% of the antisemitic incidents after October 7 to Israel-related antisemitism. Frequent stereotypes included delegitimizing Israel and equating Jews in Germany with Israel. Often previously widespread stereotypes that serve to deny, relativize or justify violence against Jews were applied to the events of October 7.
- In 2023, antisemitism in Germany also took on violent forms: On average, 10 assaults were recorded each month, amounting to a total of 121. In addition, there were 7 cases of extreme violence and 183 of antisemitic threats.
- For those affected, antisemitism had a pervasive impact in 2023. In 730 incidents, a total of 951 Jews and Israelis were affected. In 2022, the numbers were significantly lower: 331 incidents, affecting 661 Jewish and Israeli people.
- In 2023, antisemitic incidents took place more often in public spaces than in the previous year. 46% – almost half of all documented cases – occurred on the street and in public buildings, transportation or parks. In 2022, only 39% of such cases took place in public areas.

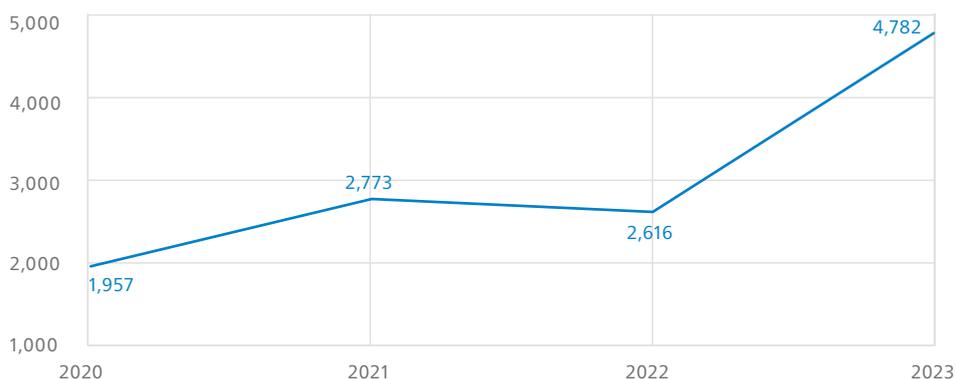
- The number of antisemitic incidents in educational institutions was strikingly high in 2023: The RIAS reporting offices documented 471 cases in schools, universities, museums and theaters, amounting to nine cases per week. In 2022, there was a total of 184 such incidents.
- The number of cases taking place in the direct living environment of those affected also increased significantly over the previous year. In 2023, there were 221 such cases, compared to 118 in 2022.
- 21 % of all antisemitic incidents in 2023 took place online. In 2022, online incidents made up 33 % of all cases. Nevertheless, the absolute number of 2023's online incidents was higher than the previous year's.
- The most common manifestation of antisemitism in 2023 was Israel-related antisemitism. Every second incident could be assigned to that category. A third of all incidents could be classified as examples of post-Shoah antisemitism and antisemitic othering.
- Also in 2023, antisemitism was entangled with other ideologies of inequality, especially with sexism. Last year there were 133 antisemitic incidents that were simultaneously sexist, whereas in 2022 there were 59 such cases.
- As in previous years, the RIAS reporting offices were unable to clearly connect the majority of 2023's antisemitic incidents to a particular political-ideological background. In 2023, this was the case for 61 % of all incidents. Of the incidents that *could* be clearly classified, anti-Israel activism was, for the first time, the most common category – making up 12 % of all cases.

Antisemitic incidents in 2023

The RIAS reporting offices recorded 4,782 antisemitic incidents nationwide in 2023. That amounts to 13 cases per day. October 7 had a significant impact on events.

When recording antisemitic incidents, RIAS distinguishes between six different incident types, depending on the nature and severity of the incident (see “Conceptual framework and categories” in the appendix). In 2023, the RIAS reporting offices documented a total of 7 cases of extreme violence, 121 assaults, 329 cases of targeted property damage, 183 threats, 4,060 cases of abusive behavior (including 833 gatherings) and 82 mass mailings. The total number of recorded antisemitic incidents rose by almost 83 % – from 2,616 incidents in 2022 to 4,782 in 2023. That represents an increase from an average of seven incidents per day in 2022 to 13 in 2023. The massacres perpetrated by Hamas and other terror organizations on October 7, 2023 played a central role in this increase and are described below as an opportunity structure for antisemitic activities. This refers to certain underlying conditions that enable antisemitic behavior or make it more likely to occur. A total of 58% of all antisemitic incidents in 2023 occurred after October 7, which averages out to 32 cases per day in the period between that date and the end of the year. A detailed analysis of the antisemitic reactions to October 7 is provided in the chapter “The October 7 massacres as an opportunity structure for antisemitic incidents”.

Number of antisemitic incidents 2020–2023⁷



Also in 2023, the RIAS reporting offices documented cases of extreme violence. RIAS understands these to be physical attacks or assaults, which could lead to death or serious injuries. This category also includes attempted acts of violence. The seven cases of extreme violence in 2023 affected both Jewish communities and Jewish and non-Jewish individuals. Five of these seven cases took place after October 7, including the following example in Berlin: On the night of October 18, 2023, unknown individuals threw Molotov cocktails at a Jewish community center, but missed their target. Security forces who were present were able to extinguish

⁷ The figures for 2021 and 2022 cited in this report also include late registrations, which could not yet be taken into account in the corresponding annual reports.

a fire that started on the sidewalk. This incident destroyed the sense of security in Jewish and Israeli communities in Berlin and beyond.⁸ A few days later, there were two other cases involving extreme violence, this time in North Rhine-Westphalia. On two consecutive nights, flares were thrown at a Jewish family's house. Although the torches did not cause a fire on the first night, they ignited garden tools on the second night. The family succeeded in putting out the fire before it could spread further. After the arson attacks, extensive graffiti was found on the house. Among other things, it read: "Money rules the world", "Fuck Israel" and "Free Palestine".⁹ In Hesse, plans for an attack with antisemitic and right-wing extremist motives were foiled. The other incidents of extreme violence cannot be described in detail for confidentiality reasons.

In 2023, RIAS recorded a total of 121 antisemitic assaults – a significant increase compared to 2022's 58. The 2023 average amounted to 10 assaults per month. The number of assaults rose even more than the overall number of antisemitic incidents. One of these assaults took place in the summer in Berlin: Two men spat on a Jewish Israeli at an S-Bahn station, and kicked and beat him. The men insulted the victim in Arabic and tried to take his mobile phone. In another assault in the summer, a teenager attacked a man at Munich's central station after the latter asked him to stop shouting antisemitic slurs. The teenager punched the victim and threatened him with a knife. Neither assault could be clearly assigned to a specific political-ideological background. Generally speaking, this was the case with 92 out of the 121 documented assaults. It is often especially unsettling for victims of such antisemitic assaults when they cannot be sure who is committing them. This leads to the perception that such assaults could come from anywhere at any time, which can severely impact their sense of security.

The RIAS reporting offices also recorded 183 threats in 2023. This included clearly and directly addressed written or verbal threats of violence. RIAS classified 63% of these cases as antisemitic othering, in which those affected are confronted in an antisemitic manner because of their (assumed or actual) affiliation with Judaism or are addressed as people who do not belong to the respective imagined "we" group. One such case took place in October in Göttingen: A man who was recognizable as Jewish because of his kippah was addressed with the hostile words: "I'm going to rip your little cap off your head". In another case on New Year's Day in Hochheim am Main in Hesse, the affected person asked a neighbor to move her car so they could access their property. The woman and her boyfriend reacted

8 See RIAS Berlin, *Nach dem Terror der Hamas. Antisemitische Vorfälle in Berlin vom 7.10.2023 bis 9.11.2023* (Berlin: 2023): 4, https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/2023-11_28_RIAS_Berlin_Nach_dem_Terror_der_Hamas.pdf (accessed on March 22, 2024).

9 Here and in the following, statements made during incidents are generally quoted in English for better understanding. It is possible that the statements were originally made in German or partly in English. If the – often colloquial – statements do not have a direct translation in English, they are reproduced in German and an English approximation is provided in brackets.

unexpectedly with antisemitic insults and threats. The woman said repeatedly “Fuck off, you dirty Jew”, and her boyfriend added “I’ll fuck you! You have to deal with me now! I’m here now!” and threatened to beat them up. The person affected assumes that the two thought they were Jewish because of an earlier conversation. Because the neighbor and her boyfriend are known to them, this incident could be assigned to an Islamic/Islamist background. A third case took place shortly after November 9th, the day of remembrance for the November pogroms in 1938, when the Jewish community of Freiburg received a threatening letter that read: “soon it will be Kristallnacht again also in Freiburg we will continue the work of exterminating Jews death to Israel”. The community quickly suspended the Shabbat service.

RIAS also documented 329 cases of targeted property damage in 2023. In comparison with the 205 cases in 2022, that represented an increase of 60%. In 2023, slightly more than half of those cases involved memorial sites or signs. For example, on January 27 in Hamburg, the memorial at the Platz der Jüdischen Deportierten (Square of the Jewish Deportees) was defaced. In November in Weimar, an unknown person pelted the portrait of an Auschwitz concentration camp survivor that was part of an exhibition by the Buchenwald Memorial. Targeted property damage also occurred in the direct living environment of affected persons. In a small town in Lower Saxony, for example, a person who had hung an Israeli flag in their window reported that eggs were then thrown at the window.

RIAS recorded a decrease in antisemitic mass mailings in 2023: The reporting offices documented 82 cases, compared to 245 in 2022. However, a large number of the antisemitic e-mails reported in 2022 were traced back to a single sender. The latter had repeatedly confronted his addressees with antisemitic statements about the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. In 2023, far fewer of these e-mails were documented.¹⁰ Modern antisemitic stereotypes, such as conspiracy myths, played a role in 70% of the mass mailings in 2023. In an e-mail sent in February, for example, there was talk of a “satanic-Jewish-Christian-defiling” gang.

In the past, the RIAS reporting offices’ evaluations regularly showed that anti-semitism often expresses itself in a non-violent, more everyday form. That was also true last year. By far the most common type of antisemitic incident in 2023 – 4,060 cases, amounting to 85% of all documented incidents – involved abusive behavior. This category includes antisemitic statements as well as the damaging or smearing of non-Jewish property with antisemitic symbols or slogans. One such

10 See Bundesverband RIAS, *Antisemitic Incidents in Germany 2022* (Berlin: 2023): 11, https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/Antisemitic_incidents_in_Germany_Annual-Report_Federal_Association_RIAS_2022.pdf (accessed on March 22, 2024).

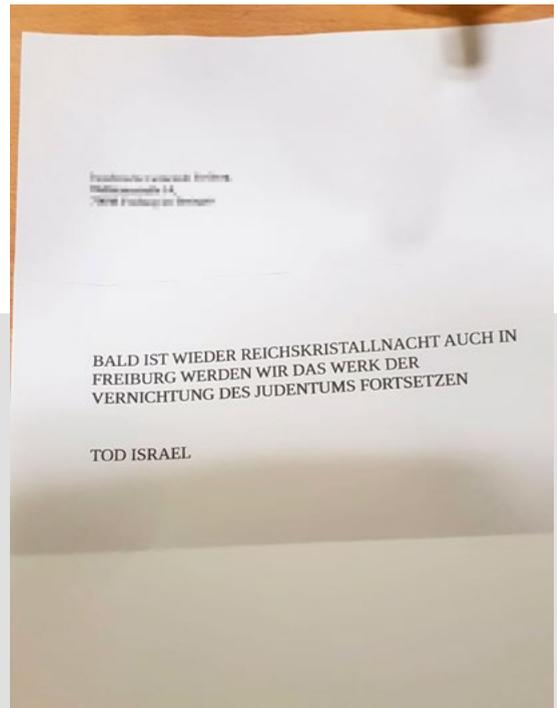
Freiburg, November 2023:

Threatening antisemitic letter sent to the Jewish community of Freiburg.

Sankt Wendel, May 2023:

Antisemitic graffiti on a trash can.

Photo: RIAS Saarland



case took place at the beginning of the year in Erfurt, when a group of people were standing in front of a movie theater. As a teenager joined them, he was greeted with the words "Na du Jude" ("Hey, you Jew"), whereupon several of the group members laughed loudly. Another case took place in February in Ingolstadt. In response to a colleague's question, the person affected told the colleague that he came from Ukraine. The colleague then responded that he would now have to be very careful so as not to say anything wrong. Later the person affected began a conversation with another colleague about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. This colleague then called Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky a "gypsy" and spread antisemitic conspiracy myths, including describing the banks and "the Rothschilds" as war profiteers. A further case was documented in Sankt Wendel in Saarland in May. The words "Jews out" and a swastika were smeared at one side of a trash can beside a bicycle path. On the other side was a Star of David next to the inscription "Don't buy from Jews".

Finally, RIAS registered a total of 833 gatherings as antisemitic incidents in 2023, which amounts to 16 antisemitic gatherings per week. A gathering is classified as antisemitic if antisemitic statements were documented in the call for the meeting, in speeches, on banners or posters, or in shouted slogans. At 17%, the share of all antisemitic incidents that gatherings made up remained constant compared to the previous year. However, there were only 430 antisemitic gatherings in 2022. The half of all documented antisemitic gatherings took place after October 7. RIAS attributed 37% of 2023's antisemitic gatherings to anti-Israel activism. For example, at the beginning of April, a gathering took place in Flensburg related to the so-called "Land Day".¹¹ There a speaker spoke about 75 years of apartheid in Israel – a statement that delegitimized Israel and was therefore antisemitic. After October 7, such gatherings increased in number. RIAS became aware of almost 35 gatherings per week after that date in which antisemitic statements were made. The slogan "Child murderer Israel", which is linked to anti-Judaic legends about ritual murders, was repeated frequently on posters and in chants. This took place, for example, at demonstrations in the middle of October in Bremen, Göttingen and Stuttgart. RIAS was able to connect 32% of the gatherings 2023 to a conspiracist milieu. At several gatherings, conspiracy myths were spread on posters and Jews were presented as puppet masters – for example, the philanthropist George Soros at a gathering in January in Düsseldorf. In 2022, the percentage of gatherings with a conspiracist milieu was 43%. At that time, many gatherings focused on the Covid-19 pandemic or, more specifically, the government's measures to address it.

11 The so-called "Land Day," which takes place yearly on March 30, commemorates the protests in 1976 in Galilee against land confiscations by the state of Israel.

The pervasive impact on the lives of those affected

Many antisemitic incidents are targeted directly against specific individuals or institutions. In 2023, there were 1,316 incidents directed against individuals and 1,270 against institutions. In 730 cases, the people affected were Jews or Israelis. By comparison, there were 331 such cases in 2022. However, the sharp increase over the previous year corresponds to the increase in the overall number of antisemitic incidents. In both years, approximately 55% of those directly affected by the incidents were Jews or Israelis. Occasionally, several people or even larger groups of people were affected by a single incident. Of the 730 cases mentioned, a total of 951 Jews and Israelis were affected. One such case took place in July in Berlin. A group of 23 men identifiable as Jewish because of their kippot were walking through a park when two men yelled "Free Falastin [Palestine]" at them from a bench. In doing so, the latter were equating the Jewish men with the state of Israel and holding them responsible for Israel's actions. If possible, RIAS also records the gender of the people affected by antisemitic incidents. In 2023, there were 445 cases affecting women, compared to 593 cases affecting men. Thus, just as in 2022, men were affected much more often than women. In the other cases, RIAS does not have any information on the gender of the individuals concerned.

Antisemitic incidents often occur in places that those affected visit regularly or cannot avoid. In 2023, 46% of all such incidents took place in public spaces (which RIAS defines as the street, public transportation, public buildings or parks), compared to 39% in 2022. The number of antisemitic incidents that took place on the street in 2023 was 1,583 – more than double 2022's 734 incidents. These include graffiti and stickers or the like. For example, in August in Ludwigsburg, the inscription "TÖDEN ALLE DREKKIGE YUDEN" (sic) was discovered in an underpass. In October, an antisemitic and anti-LGBTIQ sticker associated with the soccer scene was found on a streetlight in Saarbrücken. It was directed against the 1. Kaiserslautern soccer club and depicted men with stereotypical antisemitic physiognomies. Compared to the previous year, there also were significantly more incidents involving public buildings. This is partly explained by the number of Israeli flags that were flown from many city halls after October 7 and were then stolen or damaged. Also among the cases in public spaces were those involving leaflets or posters. In April, for example, a leaflet was posted on a publicly accessible bulletin board at Munich's city hall. It addressed protests against a concert by the musician Roger Waters, who has been widely and publicly criticized for years for his



Ludwigsburg, August 2023:
Antisemitic graffiti on an underpass.

antisemitic remarks.¹² The leaflet equated the protests with the restrictions on freedom of speech during National Socialism and simultaneously claimed that there was a compulsion to remember. The text trivialized Waters' remarks as criticism that Jews ought to meet with self-reflection. Finally, the text posed the rhetorical question as to whether "the Jewish people" were even capable of such a thing.

454 antisemitic incidents in public spaces were aimed directly – i.e., face to face – at individuals. For example, on November 9 in Rostock, a man on a tram was railing against Israel, saying "The Jews were so stupid to vote for Netanyahu" and "The Jews crucified Jesus". When another passenger intervened, they were insulted as a "Jewish cunt". In another case, which took place in August in Munich, a man insulted a group of people who were identifiable as Jewish and spat on the ground in front of them. This type of incident shows that when they were outside of protected spaces, Jews were confronted with antisemitism in normal, everyday situations in 2023.

12 See Jewish Forum for Democracy and against Antisemitism (JFDA) e.V., "Roger Waters on tour: Antisemitismus und NS-Verharmlosung," June 6, 2023, <https://www.jfda.de/post/roger-waters-antisemitismus-ns-verharmlosung> (accessed on May 3, 2024).

Antisemitic incidents that occur in their direct living environment often have a significant impact on the affected individuals. These might occur in a person's own apartment, on the staircase outside it or in their direct neighborhood. Incidents that take place in people's own living environment have a particularly negative impact, because they can destroy the feeling of security in a place that serves as a refuge and which they cannot avoid without a radical change of residence. In 2023, RIAS recorded 221 antisemitic incidents that took place in the direct living environment of the affected individuals. Among them was a case that occurred in June in Berlin, in which the mezuzah was torn from the door of the flat of the person concerned. Many such incidents take place face to face. For example, in August on a street in Schleswig-Holstein, an individual who was recognizable as Jewish because of his kippah was honked at and insulted as a Jew while he was walking in his neighborhood. In Freiburg, a Jewish refugee from Ukraine was subjected to serious antisemitic harassment and insults for months by his roommates. Among other things, one man said to his face that there were "too many of you Jews" and that he should be glad that the roommate hadn't done anything to him yet.

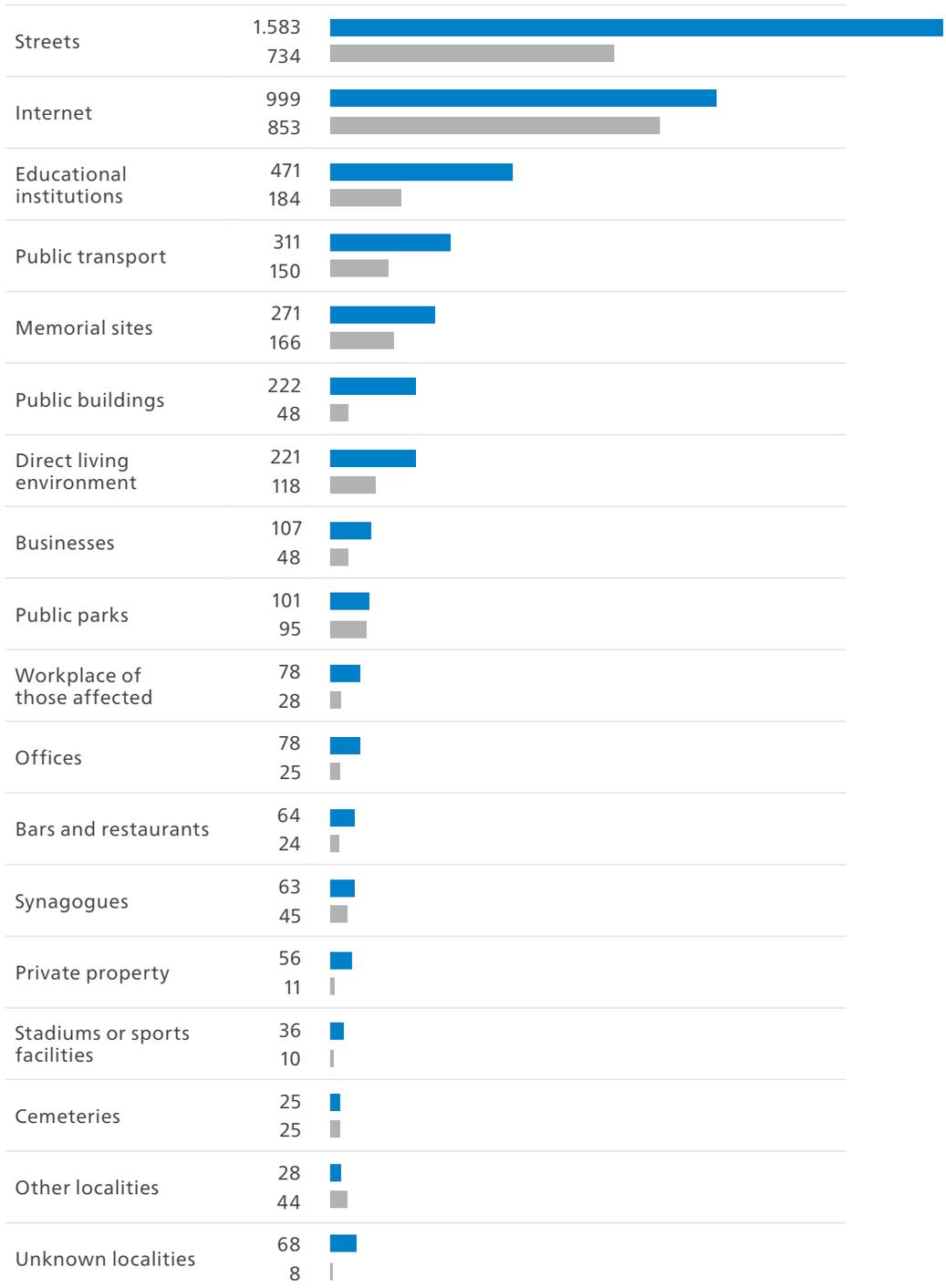
Similarly disturbing to the individuals affected are incidents that take place at their own workplace, because they often originate from colleagues they deal with on a daily basis. In 2023, RIAS documented 78 antisemitic incidents at the workplace. In June in Cologne, a colleague asked a Jewish woman about her Star of David necklace. He asked her if "that's why" she didn't talk to him and if she hated "all Germans". He also told her that "you Jews all [have] a bit of a victim complex".

RIAS also recorded more antisemitic incidents at educational and cultural institutions last year than in 2022. This included incidents at daycare, schools, universities, museums, theaters and similar institutions. In 2023, there were 471 cases overall, more than double the 184 from the year before. This sharp increase can partly be explained as a reaction to October 7. But even before that date, a major increase over 2022 could be observed – for example, of antisemitic incidents at schools, such as graffiti on school buildings and remarks made by students or teachers. Some of these were directly targeted at Jewish students. Already before October 7, RIAS recorded 86 such cases at schools – exactly as many as were recorded for the whole of 2022. By the end of 2023, this number had risen to 233 such cases.

The severity of antisemitic incidents can sometimes vary greatly, as can be seen in the different locations where they occur. This is illustrated by the following list showing where such incidents occurred in 2023. Thus, antisemitism is not confined to certain locations or situations.

Locations of antisemitic incidents

■ 2023 ■ 2022



In 2023, RIAS recorded a total of 999 antisemitic incidents on the Internet. This means that 21 % of all cases occurred online, compared to 33 % in 2022. However, the absolute number of such online incidents rose in comparison with 2022. RIAS only records antisemitic statements on the Internet as incidents if they are aimed directly at individuals or institutions. Along with e-mails and direct messages via messenger services, these include comments and postings on social-media platforms, in which people are tagged. In one case in December, someone wrote to several fellow players in live chat during an online game: "The Holocaust is a fairytale just [sic] even if it was real everyone agrees that 6 million wasn't [sic] nearly enough". Such remarks on the Internet often have a disturbing effect similar to face-to-face antisemitic incidents. The sheer volume of antisemitic statements on the Internet – also those that RIAS does not document as incidents – contributes to Jews' experience of being constantly confronted with antisemitism.

Of the online incidents recorded by RIAS in 2023, 51 % came from social-media platforms, 37 % were antisemitic e-mails and 10 % were messages in messenger apps like WhatsApp. The remaining 2 % came from other sources, such as online games or dating apps. Of the 510 incidents on social-media platforms, 168 were shared on Instagram, 147 on Facebook, 135 on X (formerly Twitter) and 49 on TikTok. For example, a prominent Jew received a direct message on Instagram from a person they did not know. In it, the latter described Jews as "sub-humans" and "parasites", who supposedly controlled the media and the financial world, and praised the Shoah and antisemitism in the Soviet Union.

Online incidents and other incidents

2023



online	offline	unknown
21 %	78 %	1 %

2022



online	offline	unknown
33 %	66 %	1 %

Antisemitic incidents in everyday situations – whether in one’s own direct living environment, on social-media platforms, while shopping, on public transport or on the way to school or work or in the park – often directly disrupt the daily lives of those affected. Affected persons are usually not in a position to avoid these potential threats. This underscores the pervasive impact of antisemitism: Jews encounter it in all kinds of situations, including their daily lives.

Manifestations of antisemitism

Different antisemitic stereotypes can be expressed in antisemitic incidents. RIAS assigns these to one of five different types of manifestations (see “Conceptual framework and categories” in the appendix). In this context, a single incident is often attributed to several manifestations if the corresponding stereotypes occur. That is the case, for example, when someone equates Israeli policies with those of National Socialism. RIAS interprets this as, on the one hand, a demonization of Israel – i.e., as a manifestation of Israel-related antisemitism – and simultaneously as a trivialization of the Shoah, which is categorized as a manifestation of post-Shoah antisemitism. Hence the 4,782 antisemitic incidents in 2023 involved a larger number of manifestations: 6,845 in total. Mathematically speaking, each case was assigned to 1.4 manifestations. For RIAS’s analyses, it is crucial both to distinguish between the different manifestations and to consider the frequent overlaps between several of them. Below, we will examine three types of manifestations in more detail: post-Shoah antisemitism, Israel-related antisemitism and antisemitic othering.

In 2023, the most common manifestation was Israel-related antisemitism: 52% of all antisemitic incidents were assigned to this category. Post-Shoah antisemitism and antisemitic othering were each recorded in a third of the incidents. In 2022, post-Shoah antisemitism had been the most common manifestation.

According to RIAS’s observations, Israel-related antisemitic stereotypes showed up in all kinds of incidents – from gatherings to cases of extreme violence and in connection with all political backgrounds. 1,260 incidents were classified exclusively as Israel-related antisemitism. One such case took place in October in Frankfurt am Main, where “Free Palestine from Zionists!” was written on the door of a toilet in a university building. In addition, a Star of David and the inscription “Save Israel” were scratched out, making them illegible.

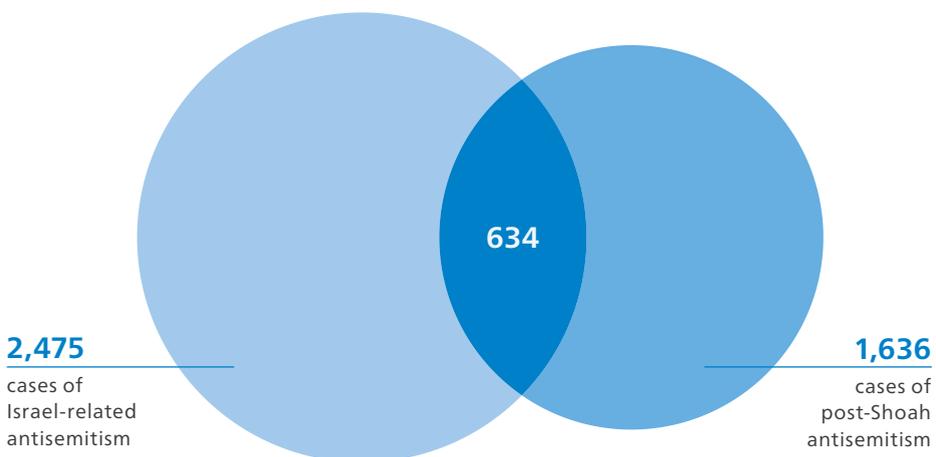
Often, however, Israel-related antisemitism turned up in combination with other manifestations. Every fourth case of Israel-related antisemitism also was classified as post-Shoah antisemitism. For example, a few days after October 7, a man in a café in Hesse claimed that “Gaza was like the Warsaw ghetto”. The person who later reported this incident to RIAS intervened. The man then confronted the reportee with the statement that Israelis were killing children indiscriminately and now this time things were going the other way around. There were also antisemitic incidents at memorial sites that combined the Israel-related and post-Shoah manifestations through a reversal of perpetrator and victim. One such case occurred in March at the Dachau concentration camp memorial site: A group of men at the location of the former Hebertshausen SS firing range provocatively explained to an educational consultant that this was their youth-club site. When

the consultant pointed out to the group that this was a memorial site, where the SS had murdered Soviet prisoners of war, the members of the group expressed upset at the alleged "Schuldkult" ("cult of guilt") and added that other bad things had also happened. The consultant, they said, should look at what Israel was doing and that Israel was killing Palestinians and stealing their land. In another case that took place in March in Altenburg (Thuringia), a swastika and the inscription "Völkermörder Israel" ("Genocide perpetrator Israel") were discovered on a memorial plaque for a synagogue destroyed in 1938.

The connection between these two manifestations shows how adaptable and compatible antisemitic stereotypes are to different narratives and discourses. The perpetrator-victim reversal in post-Shoah antisemitism has an exonerating function and is accompanied necessarily by a trivialization of the Shoah and a defense against the memory of it. This exculpatory function also comes into play in the antisemitic comparison of Israel to National Socialism: The violence and perpetrator role of Germans during the Nazi era are projected onto Israel, and Jews are represented as perpetrators comparable with the Nazis. In this way, the Shoah is trivialized and German guilt repelled, which can have an exonerating function.

Overlapping between Israel-related antisemitism and post-Shoah antisemitism

Absolute number of antisemitic incidents assigned in 2023



As in previous years, there were numerous antisemitic incidents in 2023 directed against remembering the Shoah. In particular, remembrance days such as January 27 and November 9 are, year after year, the occasions for many antisemitic incidents. On January 27 in Cologne, a classmate shouted “[Go] off to Auschwitz” at a Jewish student on the way to school. Also on January 27, there was a disturbance at a memorial ceremony in Siegen. A passer-by was angered by a banner reproducing the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno’s statement: “The demand that Auschwitz never happen again is the very first thing in education”.¹³ As the passer-by walked away, he shouted loudly: “Scheiß auf die Juden!” (“Fuck the Jews!”)

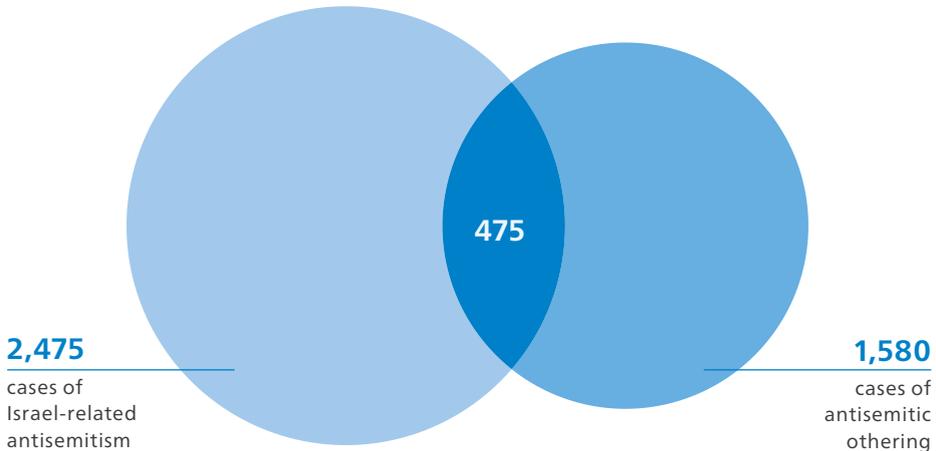
RIAS classified a third of the antisemitic incidents in 2023 as manifestations of antisemitic othering. In some cases, Jews – or people who are thought to be Jews – are labeled as alien. In other cases, people or organizations are labeled as Jewish in order to be flagged as alien. In incidents involving antisemitic othering, Jews are assaulted, threatened or harassed simply because they are Jewish or have been labeled as Jewish. One such case took place in July on a train ride in North Rhine-Westphalia. A woman who was recognizable as Jewish because she wore a visible Star of David necklace heard a group of young people near her say “Jews, Jews, Jews” and later “Jews murder, Jews murder, Jews murder”. Nobody in the crowded train reacted to these antisemitic remarks. As in previous years, RIAS documented a series of similar antisemitic labeling by soccer fans in 2023. In June in Jena, a group of men in a train chanted first “Jews Jena” in order to label the fans of a Jena soccer club as Jewish. Later the same men sang “Nakba pigs, [we’ll punch you] in the mouth, till the mug bleeds”. In November, there were antisemitic incidents during two games at the Hansa Rostock stadium. At one game, some fans were heard to shout “Jews out”, and at another game fans sang an antisemitic and racist song by a right-wing extremist band, emphasizing the line “Jew referee, that was a foul, and after the game, there’ll be a punch in the mug”.

Almost a third of the incidents of antisemitic othering were simultaneously classified as manifestations of Israel-related antisemitism. That is typically the case when Jews are identified with Israel and held responsible for Israeli policies. One such case took place in April in Bavaria. During a train ride, the slogan “Free Palestine!” was yelled at passengers who were recognizable as Jews. This case is typical of everyday situations in which Jews are confronted directly by strangers over Israeli policies. After October 7, antisemitic incidents of this type increased.

13 See Theodor W. Adorno, “Erziehung nach Auschwitz,” in Theodor W. Adorno, *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit, Vorträge und Gespräche mit Hellmuth Becker 1959–1969*, ed. Gerd Kadelbach (Frankfurt am Main: 1970 [1966]): 92.

Overlaps of Israel-related antisemitism and antisemitic othering

Absolute number of assigned antisemitic incidents in 2023



Entanglements

Antisemitic statements or actions are often accompanied by other stereotypes or ideologies of inequality. RIAS defines these as ways of thinking that reject that all people have equal rights. In many cases, corresponding stereotypes or ideologies are not only expressed in the same situation in which antisemitic statements are made but are also directly linked to them verbally. Through the entanglements between different ideologies of inequality, the quality of the content of all ideologies changes; new meaning is added through the connection, which is more than the sum of the individual parts. Thus, for example, there is a qualitative difference between someone being insulted in an antisemitic or a sexist way and someone being insulted in an antisemitic and sexist way simultaneously. RIAS systematically captures such entanglements between different ideologies of inequality. These sometimes become particularly clear in individual slogans – as, for example, in November, when the simultaneously antisemitic and antigypsy graffiti “Jews, Gypsies, Chemnitzer FC” was discovered on a wooden sign on the island of Usedom.

In 2023, RIAS recorded this kind of entanglement in 440 of the 4,782 documented incidents of antisemitism – i.e., in about 9% of the cases. Some incidents also exhibited multiple entanglements. Overall, RIAS identified 523 entanglements in these 440 cases. The “other ideologies” category includes, for example, cases that were simultaneously antisemitic and ableist.

Entanglements between antisemitic incidents and other ideologies of inequality

	2022	2023
Racism	311	209
Sexism	59	133
Hostility towards the LGBTQ community	51	80
Antigypsyism	13	26
Other ideologies	67	75

The most frequently documented entanglement was between antisemitic incidents and racism in 209 incidents. This number is lower than in 2022, when, for example, during discussions about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, racist stereotypes about Ukrainian refugees were more often combined with antisemitic interpretations of the war. In 2023, though many incidents involving antisemitism and racism were directed against refugees, they were less often directed against Ukrainians. For example, in Zapfendorf (Bavaria), a speaker at a right-wing extremist rally against housing for refugees claimed that “white native citizens” were going to be “relocated” and that this was “a project of high finance, [...] of secret elites, who strive for world domination”. The speaker was alluding to the right-wing extremist, antisemitic and racist “Great Replacement” conspiracy myth. This alleges that a secret power – often Jews – seeks to exchange the local population with a foreign one by directing migration movements. In this conspiracy myth, racism and antisemitism are directly linked.

There was a sharp increase in the entanglements between antisemitism and sexism in 2023 – the 133 cases last year were more than double the 59 cases recorded for 2022. These entanglements included not only antisemitic and sexist insults such as “Jewish slut” but also antisemitic incidents in which the desire to rape the affected parties is explicitly expressed or threatened. What is striking is that the entanglement between antisemitism and sexism is the only entanglement that increased after October 7: 58 of the 133 incidents occurred between the beginning of the year and October 7, while 75 took place after that date. However, a clear cause for this increase – i.e., whether the sexism was related to the increased manifestations of Israel-related antisemitism after October 7 or to specific

political backgrounds – could not be determined. One such entanglement was recorded in October in Leipzig. A woman stood at a tram stop near an anti-Israel demonstration. A group of young men asked her if she did not like Palestinians because she had shrugged off their calls “Ich ficke Israel, scheiß Israel” (“I fuck Israel, fuck Israel”) and “Free Palestine”. After the woman responded that she had nothing against Palestinians but against antisemitism, the men insulted her as a “cunt” and with the words “Scheiß Juden” (“fucking Jews”). They told her that she looked “like a Jew”. Finally, one of the men threatened her, laughing that she “wouldn’t be able to move for two weeks” once he “started”. The group finally got on an incoming train, showing her the middle finger. This entanglement between antisemitism and sexism has an especially strong impact on women in the context of the sexual violence that took place during the massacres of October 7.



Usedom, November 2023: Antisemitic and antigypsy graffiti from the football scene.

Photo: DIA.MV

Political-ideological background

Wherever possible, RIAS assigns a political-ideological background (political background for short) to antisemitic incidents. It does not automatically assign a specific political background to an incident based on its contents, but only if the political background is obvious – either from the incident itself (e. g., based on the perpetrators' self-identification), from the antisemitic stereotypes used (e. g., if they reflect certain religious beliefs) or from the context of the situation (e. g., incidents in the context of a specific demonstration). In general, the majority of antisemitic incidents cannot be attributed to a political background because the information required to do so is lacking.

In 2023, such an attribution was not possible for 61 % of all antisemitic incidents. The political background in these cases was categorized as unknown.¹⁴ In 2022, the share of incidents assigned to an unknown political background was much lower, at 49 %. There are several possible reasons for this. About 27 % of all antisemitic incidents documented in 2023 involved graffiti, stickers, damage or theft – incidents with mostly unknown perpetrators, which witnesses often only reported after the fact. Also, when it comes to incidents on the internet, where – especially on social media – selective and sometimes anonymous interaction is common, it is often not possible to attribute them to a political background. Incidents with an unknown political background were recorded for all types of cases – from those involving abusive behavior to cases of extreme violence. Violent incidents particularly stand out: Five of seven documented cases of extreme violence as well as 92 of the 121 recorded assaults have an unknown political background. In an incident in February at the main train station in Cologne, a man followed a Jewish woman who was wearing a Star of David necklace and had a Star of David button on her backpack. He insulted her in an antisemitic and sexist way and only let her go after repeated demands by a railway employee. Before that, he spat on the ground in front of her. Neither the act itself, nor the insults, nor the information about the perpetrator gave clear indications of a specific political background for this incident. The fact that antisemitic violence does not only come from people with an identifiable political background can generate a feeling of deep insecurity for Jews. Not only are they confronted with antisemitism everywhere, but they have little chance of avoiding it.

14 The “unknown” category is to be distinguished from the “no information” category. With the latter, there is no information available to assign an incident to a specific political background. An incident assigned to the “unknown” category might have some information available, but it has been judged insufficient to clearly assign it to a specific political background.

Among the antisemitic incidents that could clearly be assigned to a political background, anti-Israel activism was the most common category for the first time in 2023. RIAS attributes to this category incidents in which the anti-Israel motivation clearly outweighs any other political motivation – e.g., a left-wing/anti-imperialistic or an Islamic/Islamist one. This category includes, for example, acts by secular Palestinian groups as well as by supporters of antisemitic boycott campaigns against the Jewish state of Israel. In 2023, RIAS assigned a total of 595 antisemitic incidents, representing 12% of all incidents, to the political background of anti-Israel activism. In 2022, this category represented only 6% of all cases. 12 incidents assigned to this political background were assaults. A good half of the total (306 of 595) were gatherings. As a form of political expression, gatherings can usually be assigned more easily to a particular political background. One example was a demonstration on May 13 in Stuttgart on the occasion of the so-called Nakba Day, a Palestinian and Islamist commemorative event attacking the founding of the Israeli state. On the stage, a banner read, among other things, “75 years of apartheid, colonialism and displacement of the Palestinians”. A speaker proclaimed that Israel had no right to exist and that it was built on a genocide, the Nakba. The slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” was also chanted at the demonstration. Also in May, RIAS documented posters in Düsseldorf from Samidoun, a front organization for the terror group Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). One of the posters showed a map with the outline of Israel and Palestine, which was filled with the Palestinian national colors only. Next to it was written in Arabic: “Every place is a place for revenge”. After October 7, Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser banned Samidoun from operating in Germany.

The antisemitic incidents that were recorded after October 7 had a major impact on the total number of incidents with the political background of anti-Israel activism. The proportion of cases with this background was 8% before October 7 and 16% after that date. The latter included an assault that took place on October 13 in Berlin. A participant of a spontaneous anti-Israel gathering insulted a journalist as a member of a “Jewish press” and tore his hat off his head. In the first weeks after October 7, gatherings with up to 10,000 participants took place all across the country. At events that RIAS assigned to the political background of anti-Israel activism, actors with a left-wing/anti-imperialist or an Islamic/Islamist background were regular participants (for more detail, see the chapter “The October 7 massacres as an opportunity structure for antisemitic incidents”).

In 2023, the second most common type of incident with a definite political background was that with a right-wing extremist background. Such incidents made up 9% of all antisemitic incidents, compared to 15% in 2022. However, the absolute number of antisemitic incidents with a right-wing extremist background rose from 380 cases in 2022 to 408 cases in 2023. Hence there was a rise in

the number of incidents with a right-wing extremist background in 2023, but their share in the total number of incidents fell. Two of the seven documented cases involving extreme violence that could be assigned to a specific political background in 2023 had a right-wing extremist background. The same applies for nine of the 121 recorded assaults. One example of this took place in Dresden in November, where a man got on a tram and made racist and antisemitic remarks. Among other things, he spoke about "these Jewish creatures". When another passenger asked him who he was referring to, the man replied: "Obviously you" and threatened to get a gun and shoot them. After both got out together, the man threw a beer bottle in the direction of the affected person, gave a Hitler salute and yelled "Sieg Heil". The police who were called to the scene arrested the perpetrator on the spot. The less violent incidents that RIAS assigned to a right-wing extremist background include numerous graffiti. In September, for example, an antisemitic caricature of an orthodox Jew with a kippah and sidelocks, rubbing his hands and saying, "Oy vey", was discovered in Zepernick (Brandenburg). The slogan written above it – "Germans! Defend yourselves!" – is primarily known in the context of the boycott of Jewish businesses announced on April 1, 1933, when the longer version read "Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't buy from Jews!" The graffiti was also overwritten with various runes and the logo of the Young Nationalists, the youth organization of the right-wing extremist party Die Heimat (formerly NPD).

RIAS attributed 7 % of all antisemitic cases, or 355, to a conspiracist background in 2023. In 2022, with a share of 20 %, the latter category was the most common for all the incidents that could be clearly assigned to a political background. RIAS attributes a conspiracist background to cases where groups or individuals prioritize spreading antisemitic conspiracy myths and where no other political background clearly predominates. The relative frequency of incidents with this background in 2022 was strongly connected to the Covid-19 pandemic, which played a comparatively minor role in 2023. In 2022, 78 % of all incidents with a conspiracist background had a connection to the pandemic, whereas in 2023, it was only 29 %. However, the pandemic has established itself as one of a series of social reference points for conspiracy myths and is primarily discussed, along with other topics, at gatherings with a conspiracist background. Overall, 75 % of the incidents with a conspiracist background in 2023 were gatherings, 266 of 355 cases. One such gathering took place in May in Bad Kissingen (Bavaria). It addressed a wide range of different topics – from Germany's supposed lack of sovereignty to internal-combustion engines to allegedly legitimate Russian interests in Ukraine. One speaker stated that "these guys from the financial-digital complex" are "the real people behind it". Specifically, he named the philanthropist George Soros, who is regularly the subject of antisemitic conspiracy narratives.



**Zepernick (Brandenburg),
September 2023:** Antisemitic caricature
with right-wing extremist slogans.

RIAS attributed almost 3 % of all antisemitic cases in 2023 to an Islamic/Islamist background. In 2022, the share of incidents in this category was under 1 %. Of the total of 150 incidents in 2023, RIAS recorded 130 after October 7. In 2022, the total number of such incidents was 20. RIAS assigns an Islamic/Islamist background to an incident when the people involved refer positively to Islamic beliefs or symbols and no other political background predominates. What is striking is the high number of threats associated with this background: 25 of 183 cases involving antisemitic threats were connected to an Islamic/Islamist background, making it more common than with any other political-background attribution. Only 53 threats were even assigned a political background. One example of threats being associated with this particular background occurred in November in Frankfurt am Main. In front of a shopping center, a booth was set up by the Islamist group Reality Islam. The group is ideologically aligned with the Islamist Hizb ut-Tahrir, whose activity has been banned in Germany since 2003. While speaking to a passer-by about the October 7 massacres, a man at the booth claimed that no Israeli babies had been tortured that day, and that Hamas does not play a political role. Finally, he said that the media was lying on the orders of the Israeli army. In a further discussion, Israel was equated with National Socialist Germany. On a map displayed at the booth, locations in Israel were marked with swastika flags.

In 2023, RIAS attributed 3 % of all antisemitic incidents to a left-wing/anti-imperialist background. In 2022, this share was 2 %. Of the 138 documented cases with this political background, 109 took place after October 7. For example, in October in Leipzig, the authoritarian anti-imperialistic group Kommunistischer Aufbau (Communist Development) posted a pamphlet in which it demonized Israel as an apartheid state and justified and trivialized the October 7 massacres as a legitimate “fight against Israeli occupation” and “against Zionism”. The designation of Israel as an apartheid state decontextualizes the historical phenomenon of apartheid. The term distorts actual racist conditions in Israel and presents them as virtually unchangeable characteristics of the Jewish state. In this way, Israel is demonized and delegitimized.

In 2023, RIAS attributed only 1 % of the antisemitic incidents, respectively, to a Christian/Christian fundamentalist background or to a politically centrist background. An incident that took place in September on the evening of the Jewish New Year’s festival, Rosh Hashanah, in Bavaria belongs in the latter category. In a bar, there was a discussion about an antisemitic leaflet that Hubert Aiwanger, the federal chairman of the Freie Wähler (Free Voters) party as well as Minister for Economic Affairs and Deputy Premier of Bavaria, is said to have distributed when he was at school in the 1980s. The leaflet contained, among other things, threats of extermination against alleged “traitors to the fatherland”. The text also made fun of people who had been murdered in Nazi concentration and death camps. At the

time of the discussion, there was a societal debate about, among other things, the question of whether this leaflet could be dismissed as a so-called “youthful sin”. This issue was stressful for many Jews, especially in Bavaria, where Aiwanger was campaigning for the upcoming state elections.¹⁵ When one person in the bar attempted to express empathy for Shoah survivors and their descendants by speaking about how the contents of the leaflet might affect them, a man reacted: “They’ve been doing that for 2,000 years”. He went on to say that it was now “Yad Vashem”, confusing the Jewish New Year’s festival with the name of the Israeli Shoah memorial in Jerusalem. He followed this with a loud tirade about how the Israelis were doing “nothing different” with the Palestinians and that Israel was conducting a “genocide”.¹⁶ An incident with a Christian background occurred in October online, after a Thuringian pastor called for solidarity with Israel in a Facebook post two days after the massacres of October 7. Someone then commented on this with the words that God “had not accepted this modern state of Israel”, that “Only when Israel realizes that [Jews] murdered the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will God send it the spirit of grace” and that “Modern Israel is a state established on the basis of the antichrist T.[heodor] Herzl”.

15 See RIAS Bayern, ed., “Schwerpunkt Die Flugblattaffäre um Hubert Aiwanger,” *Antisemitische Vorfälle in Bayern 2023* (Munich: 2023): 27–31, https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/20240429_Rias_Bayern_Jahresbericht_2023.pdf (accessed on May 3, 2024).

16 RIAS only considers the genocide accusation antisemitic if it is clear from the broader context. For example, that is the case when the accusation is accompanied by a trivialization of the Shoah.

The October 7 massacres as an opportunity structure for antisemitic incidents

As in previous years, 2023 showed that an opportunity structure can contribute to a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents. Here it is important to emphasize that opportunity structures are not the reason for antisemitic statements or acts but simply provide a framework for them. In other words, opportunity structures make antisemitic statements or acts more likely. Generally pre-existing antisemitic sentiments then connect to a current context that is especially present in the media. A characteristic of opportunity structures is that they are often accompanied by an increased mobilization by political actors, who can contribute to antisemitism being articulated more frequently, openly or violently.¹⁷ In recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic and the escalation of the Arab-Israeli military conflict have acted as such opportunity structures. An analysis of these opportunity structures also shows that they can have a very different impact on incidents: While the Covid-19 pandemic acted as a constant opportunity structure over a long period of time, the escalations in the Arab-Israeli conflict in May 2021 resulted in a sudden and sharp increase in violent antisemitic incidents. This culminated on a specific weekend, after which the number of cases decreased.¹⁸ On October 7, 2023, terrorists from Hamas and other Islamist terrorist organizations¹⁹ conducted a coordinated attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip. In several massacres of the civilian population, they murdered more than 1,139 people, injured more than 5,000 – some seriously – and abducted more than 240 people, taking them to the Gaza Strip. Simultaneously, Palestinian terror organizations shot thousands of rockets at Israel from the Gaza Strip. At the time of this writing, there are still more than 100 hostages – living or already dead – held captive by Hamas and other terror organizations. The terrorists filmed themselves breaking through the Israeli barriers and committing the massacres, and distributed the videos – sometimes live – over social media and messenger services. The Israeli army reacted to the massacres at first with rocket fire and then, by the end of October, with a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip, in order to destroy Hamas's infrastructure and to free the hostages. International attention now focused more and more on the events in Gaza, while the massacres of the Israeli civilian population that had triggered this war faded increasingly into the background. Simultaneously, the number of antisemitic incidents rose sharply worldwide.

17 See Samuel Salzborn, "Antisemitismus zwischen Tat und Straftat. Zur Dunkelfelderhellung am Beispiel des Berliner Modells der Antisemitismusbekämpfung," *Recht und Politik* 57 (2021): 226.

18 See Bundesverband RIAS, *Antisemitismus im Kontext der Covid-19-Pandemie* (Berlin: 2020), https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/2020-09-08_Rias-bund_Antisemitismus_im_Kontext_von_covid-19.pdf (accessed on March 15, 2024). See also Bundesverband RIAS / IIBSA, *Mobilisierungen von israelbezogenem Antisemitismus im Bundesgebiet 2021* (Berlin: 2021), https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/Bundesverband_RIAS_-_Mobilisierungen_von_israelbezogenem_Antisemitismus_im_Bundesgebiet_2021.pdf (accessed on March 15, 2024).

19 According to research by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), five other terrorist organizations besides Hamas took part in the massacres of October 7: the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the Omar Al-Qasim Forces, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Mujahideen Brigades. See Abdelali Ragad, Richard Irvine-Brown, Benedict Garman, and Sean Seddon, "How Hamas built a force to attack Israel on 7 October," *BBC*, November 27, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67480680> (accessed on April 4, 2024).

The violence that took place in Israel on October 7 and the sharp increase in antisemitism that followed represented a turning point for many Jews worldwide. Also in Germany, the already challenging daily lives of Jews have been characterized subsequently by a rapid rise of antisemitic incidents in a wide variety of societal spheres. These include the open glorification of genocidal violence against Jews at gatherings or on social media, the generally increased threat to Jewish institutions and the constant confrontation with antisemitism and with one-sided assessments of the events that deny Israeli victims, even among circles of acquaintances. For a long time, Jews in Germany have been forced to weigh their visibility as Jews against their own security. The intensification of this necessity since October 7 has led to Jewish life in Germany becoming much less visible. Especially immediately after that date, the combination of the violence in Israel and the rising antisemitism in Germany has resulted in a high level of danger for Jews.

What characterizes October 7 as an opportunity structure²⁰ is the fact that the terror attacks and massacres were extremely violent events with a genocidal nature, which subsequently had a qualitative and quantitative impact on antisemitic incidents in Germany. After October 7, there was not just a sudden, very sharp increase in antisemitic incidents but also a sharp increase in incidents that were violent or accompanied by threats of extermination against Jews. The frequency of antisemitic incidents remained at a high level until the end of the year.

The massacres of October 7 were often celebrated or legitimized, and announcements were even made that they would be repeated in Germany. Simultaneously, the claim that Israel was committing genocide against the Palestinians became increasingly normalized. People who on the one hand celebrate the genocidal violence of Hamas and on the other hand accuse Israel of genocide are engaging in a perpetrator-victim reversal, projecting antisemitic violence onto Jews.

20 See Julius Gruber, Bianca Loy, and Daniel Poensgen, "Antisemitic Reactions to October 7: The German Case" in Rosa Freedman, David Hirsh (ed.), *Responses to 7 October: Law and Society* (Abingdon, Oxon: 2024). See also Bundesverband RIAS, *Antisemitic reactions to October 7. Antisemitic incidents in Germany between October 7 and November 9, 2023, in the context of the massacres and the war in Israel and Gaza*, November 28, 2023, https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/RIAS_Monitoring_Bericht_30-11-2023_Englisch.pdf (accessed on March 15, 2024).

32 cases per day

From October 7, 2023 to the end of the year, RIAS became aware of 2,787 anti-semitic incidents. That amounts to 58 % of all the cases documented in 2023 and averages out to 32 cases per day, compared to the seven cases per day documented before October 7. Many of the incidents after October 7 had a direct connection to Hamas's massacres or to the subsequent war in Israel and the Gaza Strip. Jews in Germany were often made responsible for the war. In November, for example, a Jew from Bavaria received a photo on Instagram accompanied by the words "Your hands are bloody!" and "#ceasefireNOW". RIAS also documented cases that did not explicitly address the events in Israel or the Gaza Strip but were connected to them. Among other things, there was an increase in targeted property damage after October 7. One such case took place a few days after October 7 in Tübingen, where several memorial stones connected to the former synagogue were damaged. At the end of December in Berlin, graffiti depicting intertwined swastikas and Stars of David were discovered at various locations in Berlin.



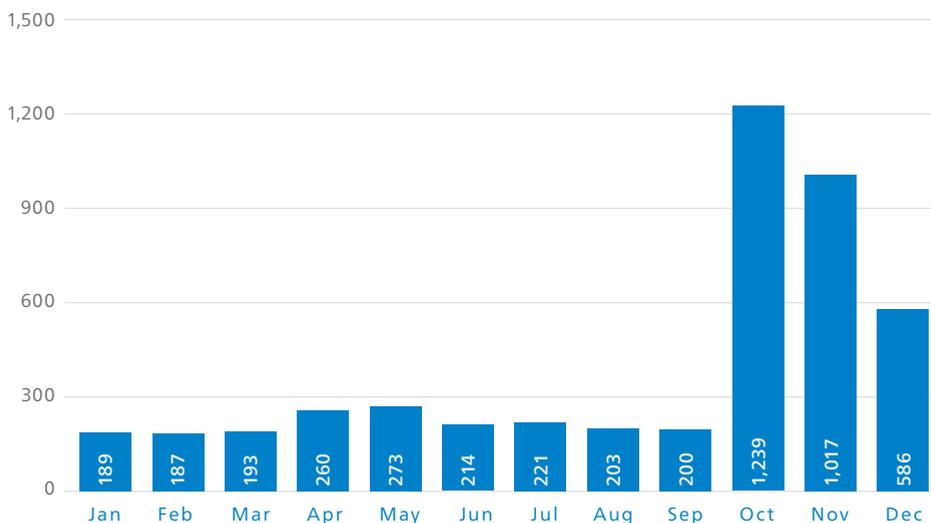
Berlin, November 2023: Antisemitic graffiti at an underground stop. Similar graffiti was recorded between October and December at numerous places in Berlin.

Photo: RIAS Berlin

After October 7, antisemitism expressed itself more violently than before. Between that day and the end of the year, RIAS documented five cases of extreme violence – out of seven cases for the whole year. In addition, 76 of 2023’s 121 recorded assaults took place after October 7, as did 117 of 183 threats. An antisemitic assault occurred in the middle of October in Regensburg. One member of a group of men shouted that he hated Jews and that Hitler had been right. When a passer-by intervened, someone in the group sprayed his face with pepper spray.

The first antisemitic incidents in response to the massacres in Israel took place on October 7 itself: Several witnesses reported how people openly celebrated Hamas’s acts. At the main train station in Berlin, a small group yelled “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and blatantly rejoiced over videos of the atrocities, which were playing on their smartphones. Also on social media, the massacres were immediately addressed in an antisemitic and terror-glorifying way. People who showed solidarity for the victims of the attacks were frequently subjected to antisemitic hostility and threats. According to RIAS’s analyses, the extreme antisemitic violence in Israel on October 7 gave many people an opportunity to make antisemitic remarks or to commit antisemitic acts. In the following weeks and months, the war in Israel and the Gaza Strip also provided an occasion for antisemitic mobilizations and incidents. Events such as November 9 – the day of remembrance for the November pogroms of 1938, whose 85th anniversary took place in 2023 – also were exploited for antisemitic reactions to October 7. At a memorial event on November 9 in Göttingen, while the story of deported Jewish students was told, it was interrupted twice with loud calls to “Free Palestine”. By connecting the remembrance of the Shoah to the war in Israel and the Gaza Strip, the calls rejected and delegitimized the memory of the Shoah.

Number of antisemitic incidents per month in 2023





Düsseldorf, November 2023:
Antisemitic banners at a gathering.
Photo: Antifa Infoportal Düsseldorf



Frankfurt am Main, October 2023:
Antisemitic poster at a gathering.
Photo: RIAS Hessen

Almost five antisemitic gatherings per day

Gatherings often play a special role in connection with opportunity structures, because they can mobilize and bring together people from different political backgrounds. In addition, the antisemitic contents spread at gatherings receive a greater amount of attention. They appear to be legitimate expressions of opinion and are normalized through constant repetition. Between October 7 and the end of the year, RIAS recorded a total of 415 antisemitic gatherings. Especially in the first weeks after October 7, gatherings took place across the country, some of which mobilized up to 10,000 participants. Sometimes the media coverage of the war promoted the mobilization, including the spreading of false information. RIAS was able to establish a sharp increase in antisemitic gatherings after October 17, when even public-service media spread Hamas's unproven claim that an Israeli rocket had hit the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, killing 500 people.²¹ The number of antisemitic gatherings that took place immediately after this false story was spread even exceeded the number after the beginning of the Israeli ground offensive on October 28.²² At this point in time, however, stronger governmental intervention – for example, in the form of restrictions and bans on individual gatherings – may have had a negative impact on the mobilizations.

RIAS assigned most of the gatherings – just under 61 % – to the political background of anti-Israel activism. Actors with a left-wing/anti-imperialistic background, an Islamic/Islamist background or a conspiracist background also took part. Israel-related antisemitism was the unifying element for these differently oriented participants. At several gatherings, demonstrators shouted the Islamist slogan “Khaybar, Khaybar, ya yahud”,²³ for example, shortly after October 7 in Stuttgart. At the gatherings that took place soon after the Hamas massacres, the latter were often denied or legitimized as praiseworthy acts of resistance – sometimes even at the same time. Later, statements that delegitimized Israel gained importance, such as when demonstrators denied the Jewish state's right to exist. One example is the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, which implies that Palestine should also include the territory of Israel. In addition, analogies between the situation in Israel and the Gaza Strip and that of National Socialism and the

21 See Monika Hübscher, “Krieg der Bilder,” *tageszeitung*, October 19, 2023, <https://taz.de/Nahost-Konflikt/15963808/> (accessed on May 3, 2024). See also Marco Bertolaso, “Unser Fehler in einem X'-Post,” *Deutschlandfunk*, October 19, 2023, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/unser-fehler-in-einem-x-post-100.html> (accessed on May 3, 2024).

22 See Bundesverband RIAS, *Antisemitic reactions to October 7. Antisemitic incidents in Germany between October 7 and November 9, 2023, in the context of the massacres and the war in Israel and Gaza*, November 28, 2023, 18–21, https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/RIAS_Monitoring_Bericht_30-11-2023_Englisch.pdf (accessed on March 15, 2024).

23 In English the complete slogan “Khaybar, Khaybar, oh Jews, remember Khaybar, the army of Muhammed will return” is an affirmative reference to a campaign in the year 628 by the prophet Muhammed against an oasis settled by the Jews, which ended with Muhammed conquering the area and – according to some sources – his army killing part of the Jewish population. It can be interpreted as a religiously legitimated call for violence against Jews.

Shoah also become more common at gatherings. At a gathering at the beginning of November in Düsseldorf, for example, the following slogan was observed on a poster: "Dear Zionists, stop doing what happened to you in World War III!"

Political background and manifestations

For 66 % of the antisemitic incidents that took place after October 7, the political background was judged to be unknown.²⁴ RIAS attributed 16 % of the incidents to anti-Israel activism. This particular political background played a central role especially in gatherings, because the rejection of the Jewish state can mobilize and unite people with very different political motivations. Other political backgrounds were also observed: 5 % of all cases could clearly be attributed to an Islamic/Islamist background and 4 % to a left-wing/anti-imperialist one.²⁵ After October 7, the share of incidents with these backgrounds was higher than it was for the entire year.²⁶ One example of an incident with an Islamic/Islamist background was death threats against the liberal-progressive Ibn Rushd-Goethe Mosque in Berlin, after it had expressed its solidarity with Israel. Also in Berlin, antisemitic graffiti with a left-wing/anti-imperialist background were recorded: On an underground sign, someone had written "Zionist Israel equal [sic] Nazi Germany" along with a hammer and sickle and the slogan "Free Palestine".

When it comes to manifestations of antisemitism, one category clearly dominates: RIAS attributed 71 % of the antisemitic incidents after October 7 to Israel-related antisemitism. Already familiar slogans and stereotypes were partially updated and applied to the events of October 7. In addition, fantasies and threats of extermination became common. In a case that took place in Munich shortly after October 7, two men threatened a group of people who were carrying Israeli flags with death and insulted them in Arabic. Also in Munich, a similar case took place at the main train station at the end of December. A teenager repeated several times that all Jews and Israel should be gassed. When passers-by intervened, he responded that he could say that because his uncle was in the Lebanese army and there was freedom of expression in Germany. Later he added that Israel didn't exist, only Palestine, and that "the Jews [are] devils and monsters".

24 See the information on page 30.

25 In addition, 4 % of the antisemitic incidents after October 7 were assigned to a right-wing extremist background, 2 % to a conspiracist background, 1 % to a politically centrist background and less than 1 % to a Christian/Christian fundamentalist background. There was no information about a political background for 1 % of the incidents.

26 See also page 30.

With the start of Israel's military reaction to the massacres of October 7, the accusation that Israel was committing genocide against the Palestinians became widespread. RIAS only considers this accusation to be an antisemitic incident if it is made in a specific context. It applies, for example, when the Shoah is trivialized or Israel's action equated with National Socialism, such as in the slogans "One genocide does not justify another one" or "One Holocaust does not justify another", which reverse perpetrator and victim. The latter slogan was spread frequently, including at a gathering in October in Frankfurt am Main. Another form of the perpetrator-victim reversal after October 7 was Israel being called a "terror state" and thus delegitimized.

The slogan "child murderer Israel", which is connected to the anti-Judaic ritual-murder legend and serves to delegitimize the state of Israel, was documented frequently after October 7. In Kiel in the middle of October, a group with Palestinian flags chanted the slogan following a rally in solidarity with Israel.

RIAS classified a third of the incidents after October 7 as manifestations of post-Shoah antisemitism. These include equating Israel with National Socialism, which involves a reversal of perpetrator and victim, such as in the previously cited slogan "Zionist Israel equal [sic] Nazi Germany". For example, in November in Berlin, the following graffiti was discovered on the wall of a public toilet: "Netanjahu is Nazi Hitler Israel has killed 3038 children 1 child every 10 minutes". In another case in October in a small town in Baden-Württemberg, the words "Jews must be gassed" were found on a school next to a Star of David. On a bridge in Leipzig in October, the words "Israel die! NS now!" appeared. At a November gathering in Düsseldorf, a poster made an analogy between the murder practices in Nazi extermination camps and the situation in Gaza: The image of a shower head with the year 1933 was juxtaposed against the image of a bomb with the year 2023. Next to these images, "Stop the crime" and "Where's the difference?" were written.

RIAS attributed another third of the incidents that took place after October 7 to antisemitic othering. In one of these cases, a participant in an anti-Israel demonstration in November in Bremen took a photograph of a woman counter-demonstrator. When the woman objected to being photographed, one of the anti-Israel demonstrators responded: "This country will only be free when all Jews disappear forever from every country". When she asked him if he wished to be antisemitic, he replied: "I am an antisemite".

One development that could already be seen during the escalations of the Arab-Israeli conflict in May 2021 intensified after October 7: Jews were equated with Israel and, for example, held responsible for the actions of the Israeli military. In November in Berlin some students accused a Jewish fellow student of defending the "Israeli terror state" and said that "someone like him" should "not be surprised".

Antisemitic incidents after October 7 were often accompanied by sexist insults. One such case took place in November in Berlin. When a man saw a woman who was passing by a November 9 memorial event, he yelled not only “ScheißIsrael” (“fucking Israel”) and “ScheißJüdin” (“fucking Jew”) at her but also “you Jewish slut”. At another incident that took place during a football game in October in Cologne, a moment of silence for the victims of October 7 was interrupted by a spectator shouting “Freedom for Palestine” and “you cunts”.

Most of the stereotypes that characterized the incidents after October 7 were not new; they were simply transferred to October 7 and partially updated. In this way, the violence that took place on that date was denied, trivialized or legitimated. This form of reaction to Nazi crimes and other acts of antisemitic violence is well known. Reflecting other familiar antisemitic tropes, Jews or Israel were held responsible for the terror of October 7 and were accused of profiting from it.

A new reality: Current confrontations with antisemitism

Antisemitism has a pervasive impact on the everyday life of Jews in Germany. Already before October 7, they were repeatedly confronted with it in everyday situations and therefore forced to balance between their visibility as Jews and their personal safety.²⁷ This situation worsened dramatically after October 7. In the first days after the massacres, some Israeli restaurants remained closed or limited their visibility.²⁸ As a precaution, Jewish families chose not to send their children to daycare or schools. Even though community facilities have reopened and people have resumed their daily routines, security measures remain high at many locations of Jewish life. After the massacres, antisemitism also showed up more frequently in everyday situations. Jews in particular experience antisemitism more often in their neighborhood, among their acquaintances and at work. Since October 7, many Jews have tried more than before not to be recognizable as such. For example, they choose not to wear recognizably Jewish symbols such as kippot or jewellery with the Star of David, or avoid speaking Hebrew in public. In a survey conducted in December 2023 by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, 68 % of the Jewish community leaders who were questioned said that they had noticed a fear of being

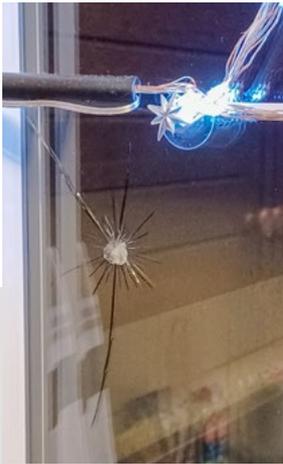
27 See Bundesverband RIAS, “Das bringt einen in eine ganz isolierte Situation,” *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland 2017–2020* (Berlin: 2023), https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/2023-02-28_Isolierte_Situation_Web.pdf (accessed on March 18, 2024).

28 At the time of this writing, two Jewish-Israeli restaurants in Berlin have either had to relocate or close permanently as a result of the reactions to October 7.

attacked or a deep sense of insecurity among their community members, and 78% stated that their lives as Jews in Germany had changed after October 7. This includes a feeling of insecurity in public, fear for the future of Jewish children and concern over the prospects of Jewish life in Germany in general.²⁹ As a result, Jewish life in Germany since October 7 has been even less visible than before. It represents a return to a new reality.

After October 7, RIAS documented a total of 143 incidents that took place in the direct living environment of those affected, compared to 78 cases between January and October 7. On several occasions, the apartments of Jews were marked with Stars of David or swastikas, reminiscent of the National Socialist practice of marking especially Jewish shops with Stars of David. Shortly after October 7 in Berlin, the door of a house in which a Jewish woman lives was painted with a Star of David. Soon after, in Hannover, the slogan "Free Palestine" was written on the door of a Jewish woman's apartment. In addition to such antisemitic graffiti on apartments or houses, people reported antisemitic remarks by their neighbors. At the end of November in Potsdam, for example, two neighbor women rang a woman's doorbell to complain about posters on the house that drew attention to the Israeli hostages that had been taken by Hamas. The neighbors said that Israel was a "terror state" and that the media was spreading lies. Finally, they denied that the Hamas massacres had taken place.

29 See Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, *Lagebild: Auswirkungen des Krieges in Israel auf die Jüdischen Gemeinden in Deutschland*, December 2023, https://www.zentralratderjuden.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Lagebild/Zentralrat_Lagebild_Infografik.pdf (accessed on May 5, 2024).



Altenkirchen, November 2023:
Targeted damage to a window with
a Star of David and Israeli flag.



Berlin, October 2023:
Antisemitic marking on a
house in Berlin. Similar
cases were documented
throughout the city.

Photo: RIAS Berlin

25 antisemitic incidents per week at educational institutions

Antisemitic incidents at educational institutions also increased dramatically after October 7. These included cases that took place at universities, schools and daycare facilities, as well as at museums and similar establishments. RIAS recorded 301 of the 471 such incidents that took place in 2023 after October 7. For example, in mid-October in Cologne, numerous students made antisemitic remarks in the classroom and on the playground. Among other things, it was said that “the Jews” had provoked the war, that they were “murderers” and bore the responsibility for what was happening “in Palestine”. It was also said that Jews were behind most wars because they earned money from them, that they were to blame for the Shoah and in general cause many problems. In December in Saxony, a student initially insulted a teacher as a “dirty Jew” and “Frau Hitler”. He then threatened her and injured her by slamming a door. In October in Rhineland-Palatinate, several schoolchildren spoke to a classmate in an antisemitic manner. One of them said threateningly: “Your family in Israel will die, Israel will be destroyed”. Among the reported incidents at educational institutions were 113 cases at universities. Anti-Israel propaganda was often spread, including in November in Oldenburg (Lower Saxony). When a man who was distributing antisemitic flyers on university grounds was asked to stop, he yelled “Zionists are murderers!” The flyer spread the conspiracy myth that Zionists, whom he described as “the devil’s children”, had been responsible for National Socialism. In Weimar in mid-October, a note was discovered on campus that spread false information about the alleged Israeli rocket attack on the Al-Ahli Hospital in the Gaza Strip on October 17. The note also trivialized the Shoah, by calling the rocket attack a “Holocaust”. The note read: “Holocaust. 1000 killed in Israeli strike on hospital in Gaza. 17 October 2023 #Free_Palestine”.

Antisemitism online

After October 7, RIAS recorded a total of 605 online cases of antisemitism, of which 314 were social-media posts and 202 e-mails. In particular, antisemitic direct messages often have as severe an impact on those affected as face-to-face encounters. In October, a person in Weiden in the Oberpfalz (Bavaria) received one such message via WhatsApp. After he had sent out information about a fundraiser for the Israeli civilian population, an acquaintance responded with the following words: "A land as big as Israel lets itself be fucked in the ass by a flyspeck like Gaza.... The Mossat [sic] already knew 2 weeks ago what was planned and didn't react.... Besides, I don't support dirty Jews...". In mid-October in Cologne, an Israeli woman who had been promised a room in a shared apartment received antisemitic direct messages. She was told that she would not get the room because she was Israeli and didn't question Israel's right to exist. In a voice message, a resident of the apartment also denied that the massacres of October 7 had taken place.

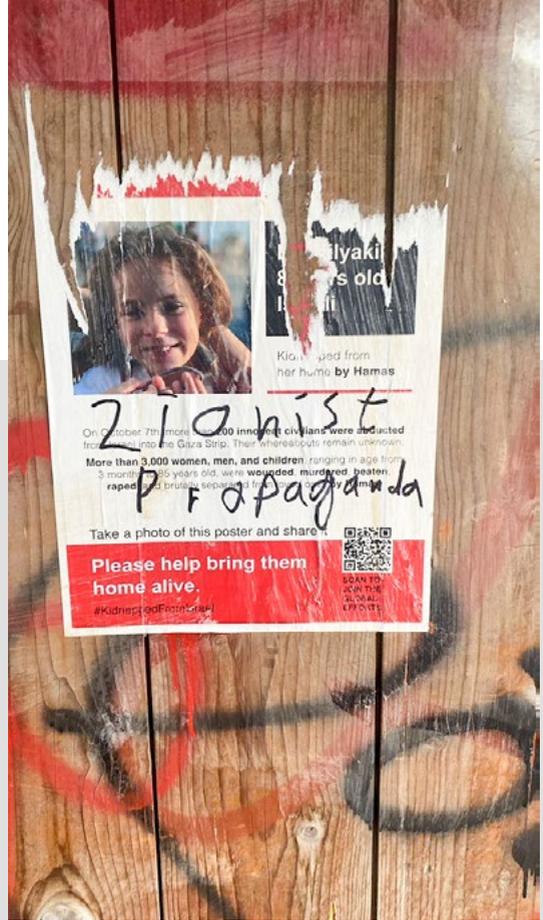
Attacks on expressions of solidarity

Since October 7, there have been repeated attacks on expressions of solidarity with the state of Israel, with Israelis or with Jews. One such case took place in November in Altenkirchen (Rhineland-Palatinate). A non-Jewish couple had hung an Israeli flag next to a Star of David in the window of their flat in order to express solidarity with Israel. On November 9, unknown people threw an object at their window, cracking the glass. Someone was in the room at the time but was not injured. Antisemitic incidents also occurred frequently at solidarity gatherings. In Hannover shortly after October 7, a passer-by said "Scheiß Juden" ("Fuck Jews") to a steward of a gathering in support of Israel.

RIAS recorded numerous cases of deliberate damage or removal of posters that drew attention to those who had been murdered or kidnapped into Gaza by Hamas. In October in Weimar, one such poster with photos of the hostages was defaced with the statement "All Jews lie". At the beginning of November in Berlin, unknown people wrote "Zionist propaganda" on a similar poster. In several other cases, the posters were so damaged that the faces and names of the hostages were unrecognizable. These attempts to make the victims of Hamas invisible can be seen not only as expressions of a lack of empathy or solidarity but also as an affirmation of antisemitic violence.

Berlin, November 2023: Defaced and partly torn poster of an Israeli hostage.

FPhoto: Nikolas Lelle



Dresden, November 2023: Defaced posters commemorating the hostages kidnapped by Hamas. BDS is the abbreviation for an antisemitic boycott campaign.

Photo: vucritique



Conclusion

The increase of antisemitic incidents in Germany after October 7 was significantly higher than with comparable earlier opportunity structures. In addition, it began immediately after the massacres and not as a reaction to Israel's defensive measures. This suggests that the genocidal violence against Jews in Israel also served as a strong motivation for people in Germany to make antisemitic statements or commit antisemitic acts.

From October 7 to the end of the year, RIAS documented an average of 32 antisemitic cases per day. 58 % of all recorded antisemitic incidents in all of 2023 took place after October 7.

Antisemitism expressed itself after October 7 in a more violent way than before: Among other things, 71 % of all cases of extreme violence in 2023, 63 % of all assaults and 64 % of all threats were recorded after October 7.

Gatherings played a central role: In the period after October 7, RIAS recorded 415 antisemitic gatherings, most of which were attributed to the political background of anti-Israel activism. People and groups with different political backgrounds took part in these gatherings, but they were united by their negative and even hostile attitude towards Israel.

Already familiar antisemitic slogans and stereotypes were updated after October 7 and partly applied to the massacres by Hamas or to Israel's reactions to them. Some especially common examples were demonizing and delegitimizing Israel, trivializing the Shoah (for example, through analogies) and equating Jews with Israel, in order to hold them responsible for the actions of the Israeli military.

The massacres that took place on October 7 were often denied, trivialized or legitimized. Jews and Israel were blamed for them or they were accused of profiting from them.

Antisemitic incidents that took place in educational institutions, at the workplace and in people's direct living environment were extremely stressful for those affected, because they had an especially strong impact on their daily lives. After October 7, Jews in Germany were forced much more strongly and more often to hide their Jewish identity for security reasons.

After October 7, the risk to Jews in Germany has objectively increased. The impacts of October 7 are clearly noticeable both at an institutional level and in Jews' daily lives.

Statistics at a glance

Antisemitic incidents in 2023 by federal state³⁰



³⁰ The total is higher than the overall number of antisemitic incidents because mass mailings with addressees in several federal states were counted as an incident for each federal state concerned, but only once in the nationwide analysis.

Antisemitic incidents in 2020–2023 by incident type

	2020	2021	2022	2023
extreme violence	1	6	9	7
assaults	39	64	58	121
damages or desecrations of property	170	205	205	329
threats	104	107	87	183
abusive behavior	1,483	2,204	2,011	4,060
mass mailings	160	187	246	82
total	1,957	2,773	2,616	4,782

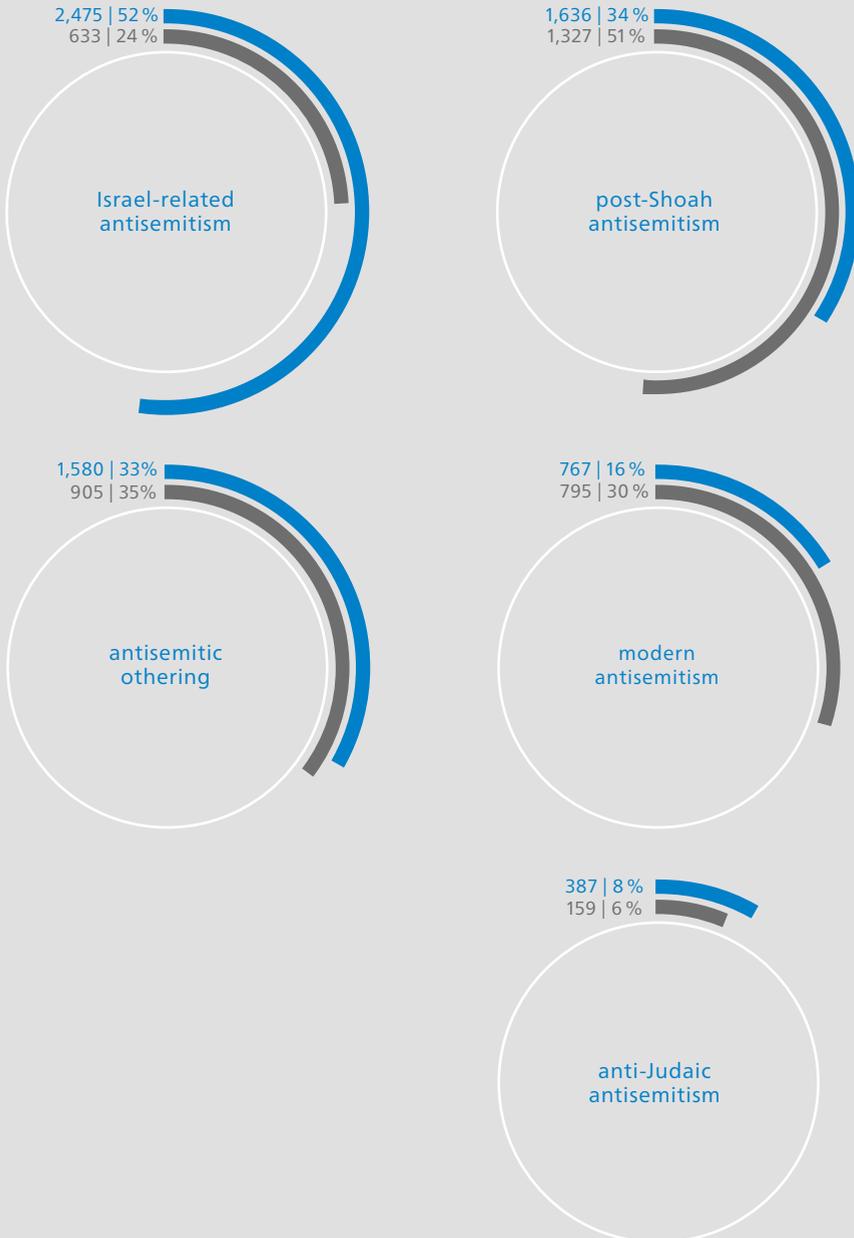
Overlaps between manifestations of antisemitic incidents in 2023

Absolute number of antisemitic incidents that were assigned to a manifestation type. The highlighted numbers show the number of incidents that were assigned to only one manifestation type.

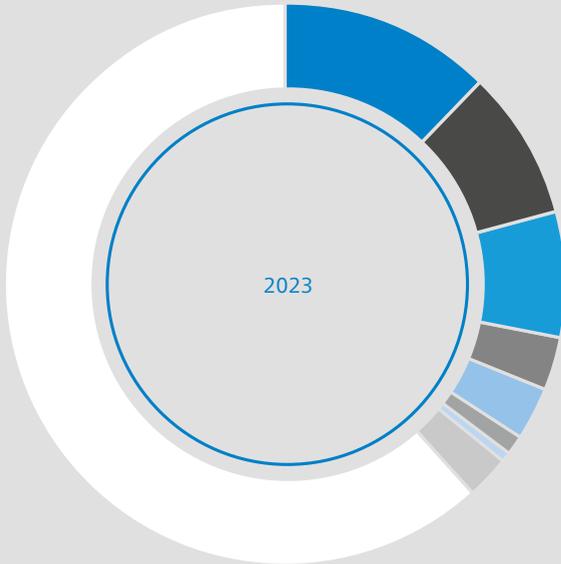
	Israel-related antisemitism	post-Shoah antisemitism	antisemitic othering	modern antisemitism	anti-Judaic antisemitism
Israel-related antisemitism	1,260	634	475	206	204
post-Shoah antisemitism	634	604	379	255	105
antisemitic othering	475	379	728	156	88
modern antisemitism	206	255	156	329	82
anti-Judaic antisemitism	204	105	88	82	83

Manifestations of antisemitic incidents in 2022 and 2023

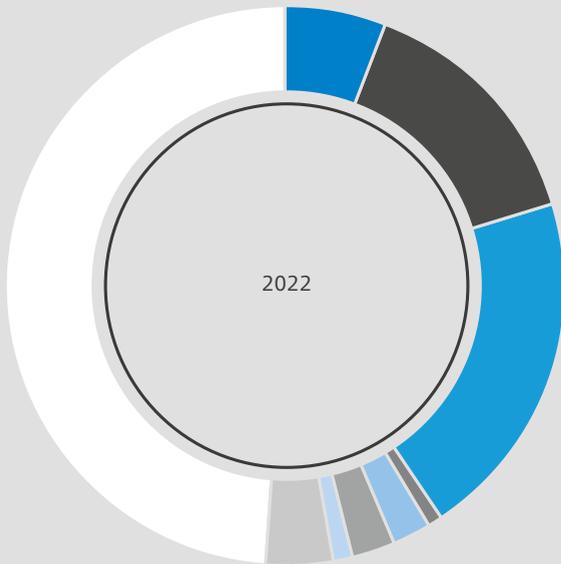
Absolute number of incidents attributed to some type of manifestation and those incidents' percentage of the total of all incidents. Since antisemitic incidents are often attributed to several manifestation types, the total sum of the percentages is greater than 100 %.



Political-ideological background of antisemitic incidents in 2022 and 2023



- anti-Israel activism
12% | 595
- right-wing extremist/
right-wing populist
9% | 408
- conspiracist milieu
7% | 355
- Islamic/Islamist
3% | 150
- left-wing/anti-imperialist
3% | 138
- politically centrist
1% | 53
- Christian/Christian
fundamentalism
< 1% | 37
- no information
2% | 110
- unknown
61% | 2,963



- anti-Israel activism
6% | 157
- right-wing extremist/
right-wing populist
15% | 380
- conspiracist milieu
20% | 531
- Islamic/Islamist
< 1% | 20
- left-wing/anti-imperialist
2% | 53
- politically centrist
3% | 71
- Christian/Christian
fundamentalism
1% | 27
- no information
4% | 104
- unknown
49% | 1,273

Those affected by antisemitic incidents³¹

Number of antisemitic incidents affecting individuals in 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023
Jewish or Israeli individuals	331	730
individuals addressed as Jewish or Israeli	37	131
individuals addressed as political opponents	10	14
politicians	13	25
representatives of civil-society organizations	24	24
representatives of memorial initiatives (e. g., memorials to victims of the Nazis)	8	3
police officers	4	9
members of the press	6	11
other non-Jewish individuals	98	252
unknown individuals	74	117
total	605	1,316

Number of antisemitic incidents affecting institutions in 2022 and 2023

	2022	2023
Jewish or Israeli institutions	526	575
memorials or memorial initiatives	143	263
civil society	240	85
institutions addressed as Jewish or Israeli	11	24
political parties	6	37
police	0	4
the press	3	3
other non-Jewish institutions	53	276
unknown institutions	3	3
total	986	1,270

Appendix

Civil-society documentation of antisemitic incidents in Germany in 2023

In order to document antisemitism from the perspective of those affected by it and to make it understandable for the non-Jewish public, it is necessary to have regionally anchored, low-threshold reporting and support networks that work closely with Jewish communities. These must function in an advocating, confidential manner and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO). Since February 2019, the Bundesverband RIAS has been supporting the development of regional reporting offices in the individual federal states and training their employees. The working methods of RIAS Berlin, developed and continuously evaluated since 2015 at the Society for a Democratic Culture in Berlin e. V. (VDK), provide the model for the regional reporting offices.

The individual RIAS reporting offices are connected with one another in the Federal Working Group (BAG), which is coordinated by the Bundesverband RIAS. Currently, reporting offices from 11 federal states are organized there. The "requirements for working as a member of the Federal Working Group (BAG) of the Bundesverband RIAS e. V." (see the chapter of the same name in this appendix) include collecting and documenting antisemitic incidents on the basis of uniformly defined criteria and categories. This takes place with the help of Bundesverband RIAS's reporting and database technology. The Bundesverband RIAS continuously reviews the criteria and categories, also in exchanges with both the BAG and scientific advisors,³² and, if necessary, develops them further.

32 The Bundesverband RIAS has regular scientific exchanges with the Community Security Trust (CST) in Great Britain. In addition, it receives scientific advice from the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism (IIBSA) in Berlin as well as from the Emil Julius Gumpel Research Department of the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies (MMZ) in Potsdam.

Use of the reporting and database technology of the Bundesverband RIAS (as of June 2024):

period of use	project name	responsible body
Since 2015	RIAS Berlin	Society for a Democratic Culture in Berlin e. V. (VDK)
Since 2019	RIAS Bavaria	Association for Enlightenment and Democracy e. V. (VAD)
2019–2021	RIAS Brandenburg	Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies (MMZ)
Since 2021	Specialist Office Against Antisemitism (FgA)	NS-Documentation Center of the City of Cologne
Since 2021	Documentation and Information Office on Antisemitism Schleswig-Holstein (LIDA-SH)	Center for Victims of Right-Wing Attacks e. V. (ZEBRA)
Since 2021	RIAS Lower Saxony	Amadeu Antonio Foundation (AAS)
Since 2021	RIAS Thuringia	Amadeu Antonio Foundation (AAS)
Since 2022	Documentation and Information Centre for Antisemitism Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (DIA.MV)	State-wide Victim Counselling Support and Information for Victims of Right-Wing Violence in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania e. V. (LOBBI)
Since 2022	RIAS North Rhine-Westphalia	Association for Enlightenment and Democratic Education e. V. (VAdB)
Since 2022	RIAS Saarland	Adolf Bender Center e. V.
Since 2022	RIAS Hesse	Democracy Center Hesse at the Philipps University in Marburg
Since 2022	RIAS Saxony	OFEK e. V.
Since 2022	RIAS Saxony-Anhalt	OFEK e. V.

Conceptual framework and categories

Antisemitic incidents that become known to the Bundesverband RIAS or the RIAS reporting offices are verified by employees of the respective projects in consultation with the reporting parties and then systematically documented. RIAS's classification of the antisemitic incidents is based on the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which is also recommended by the federal government. It was specified and made operational by Berlin civil-society initiatives for a German-language context. In addition, RIAS is guided by the IHRA working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion.³³ To distinguish between Israel-related antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israeli policies, RIAS is also guided by the triad of demonization, delegitimization and double standards proposed by Natan Sharansky.³⁴ When recording antisemitic incidents, RIAS analyses various categories: types of incidents, people affected, manifestations of antisemitism and political-ideological backgrounds.

Types of incidents

RIAS distinguishes between six different kinds of incidents, depending on the type and the seriousness of the case. This was originally developed by the Community Security Trust (CST) in Great Britain. RIAS Berlin later adapted it to a German context.

Extreme violence refers to (also attempted) physical attacks, including those that (can) result in the loss of human life or serious bodily harm. Cases of kidnapping, stabbing or shootings also belong to this category. Incidents in which people are physically attacked, but without causing life-threatening or serious injuries are classified as **assaults**. This category also includes attempted physical attacks. RIAS understands **targeted property damage** as the damaging or defacing of Jewish property with antisemitic symbols, posters or stickers. This includes the damaging or defacing of commemorative signs and locations, such as memorials, memorial plaques and memorial stones, as well as the offices of corresponding institutions. **Threats** refer to any direct and clear written or verbal threats of violence directed at individuals or institutions. The incident type **abusive behavior** covers all antisemitic statements. This also applies to remarks that are made or spread online, provided that they are addressed directly to a specific person or institution.

33 For definitions and working methods, see Bundesverband RIAS, *Arbeitsweisen* (undated), <https://report-antisemitism.de/bundesverband-rias> (accessed on June 6, 2024).

34 See Natan Sharansky, "3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 16 (2004): 3–4, <http://jcpa.org/article/3d-test-of-anti-semitism-demonization-double-standards-delegitimization/> (accessed on June 6, 2024).

The damaging or defacing of non-Jewish property with antisemitic symbols, posters, stickers, etc. is also considered abusive behavior. The category of **mass mailings** covers antisemitic messages that are addressed to a larger circle of people – usually online. Regional RIAS reporting offices also proactively monitor gatherings with potentially antisemitic content. If they detect any antisemitic content in calls, speeches or slogans or on banners or posters, they record the entire **gathering** as an antisemitic incident of the abusive-behavior type. If antisemitic assaults or threats occur on the sidelines of such a gathering, these will be documented as additional antisemitic incidents.

People affected

Regarding those affected by antisemitic incidents, RIAS distinguishes between individuals and institutions. Along with Jews and Israelis, antisemitism can also affect **individuals** who are taken to be Jewish or addressed as such, as well as all other people, such as journalists or politicians. Several individuals can also be affected simultaneously by a single antisemitic incident. Affected **institutions** refer, on the one hand, to religious or secular Jewish bodies and associations or Israeli institutions. On the other hand, non-Jewish civic organizations, political parties, media or educational institutions as well as other institutions that are perceived or addressed as Jewish can also be affected by antisemitic incidents. An institution that is the subject of an antisemitic incident is counted as a single affected party. Last but not least, there are also incidents to which **no directly affected person** or institution is assigned. This is the case, for example, with antisemitic graffiti, stickers or posters in public spaces as well as with gatherings containing antisemitic content.

Manifestations of antisemitism

RIAS distinguishes between five different manifestation types when recording antisemitic incidents. In cases of **antisemitic othering**, those affected are confronted with antisemitic statements because of their (assumed or actual) affiliation with Judaism or are addressed as not belonging to the respective imagined “we” group. **Anti-Judaic antisemitism** describes the spreading of religiously based antisemitic stereotypes – for example, the accusation that Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus. If Jews are said to have a particular political or economic power – for example, in connection with conspiracy myths – RIAS classifies it as **modern antisemitism**. **Post-Shoah antisemitism** refers to trivializing or relativizing references to National Socialist crimes, or the rejection of their memory.

Israel-related antisemitism occurs when antisemitic statements are directed against the Jewish state, such as when its existence is denied legitimacy. In practice, RIAS often assigns an antisemitic incident to several types of manifestation. Because of these multiple assignments, the number of assigned manifestations is usually higher than the number of antisemitic incidents.

Political-ideological backgrounds

RIAS assigns antisemitic incidents to a political-ideological background. However, it only does so if the background is clear, either from the case itself (for example, when the perpetrator says something about it), from the antisemitic stereotypes that are used (if these, for example, include certain religious beliefs) or from the context of the situation (for example, incidents that take place in the context of a specific demonstration). Because such a clear assignation is not always possible, many antisemitic incidents cannot be attributed to a particular background. RIAS distinguishes between seven different political-ideological backgrounds, of which each incident can only be assigned to one. Antisemitic incidents that are categorized as **right-wing extremist/right-wing populist** are connected to such a spectrum. Right-wing extremism is a collective term for anti-modern, anti-democratic, anti-pluralistic and anti-human rights attitudes, behavior and trends. Common characteristics of various right-wing extremist ideologies are ideas about the fundamental inequality of different population groups, the desire to live in ethnically homogeneous communities (*Völkern*) and the subordination of the individual to the community. Right-wing populism is a collective term for toned-down and modernized versions of right-wing extremism. In contrast to right-wing extremism, it does not demand an end to parliamentary democracy but instead aims to reshape and undermine it in an authoritarian manner.³⁵ RIAS classifies antisemitic incidents as **left-wing/anti-imperialist** when they are associated with left-wing positions or when it is possible to ascertain a connection to left-wing traditions, such as (liberation nationalist) anti-imperialism. Antisemitic incidents that are linked to a positive reference to Christian beliefs or symbols are put into the **Christian/Christian fundamentalism** category. This includes fundamentalist forms of Christianity, when no other political-ideological background predominates. RIAS classifies antisemitic cases as **Islamic/Islamist** if they refer positively to Islamic beliefs or symbols and have no other political-ideological background predominating. This category encompasses references to

35 For a more detailed definition of the term “right-wing extremism,” based on that of the political scientist Hans-Gerd Jaschke, see Bundesverband Mobile Beratung, *Mobile Beratung gegen Rechtsextremismus. Inhaltliche und methodische Grundsätze. Aktualisierte Fassung* (2021): 18, https://bundesverband-mobile-beratung.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BMB_Grundsatzpapier_2021.pdf (accessed on June 6, 2024).

different understandings of Islam, including Islamist ones. Antisemitic incidents are assigned to a **conspiracist background** if their focus is on the spreading of antisemitic conspiracy myths and no other political-ideological background predominates. Similarly, the **anti-Israel activism** background is only assigned to antisemitic incidents that cannot clearly be connected to any other political-ideological background and where hostility to Israel clearly dominates over another political position, such as a left-wing, right-wing or Islamist one. Anti-Israel activism includes, for example, secular Palestinian groups as well as supporters of antisemitic boycott campaigns against the Jewish state. Antisemitic incidents that cannot be clearly assigned to any of the afore-mentioned political-ideological backgrounds and where the people responsible claim to represent democratic positions are assigned to a **politically centrist** background.

Requirements for working as a member of the Federal Working Group (BAG) of the Bundesverband RIAS e. V.

At a meeting that took place on March 2–4, 2022, the Federal Working Group (BAG) of the Bundesverband RIAS agreed to the following mandatory and desirable requirements for the work as a civil-society contact point for antisemitic incidents. These requirements serve as a guide for existing, new and future projects of this kind and are continually reviewed and further developed at BAG meetings.

- The definition of an antisemitic incident as such is based on the version of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s working definition of antisemitism adopted by the Society for a Democratic Culture in Berlin e. V. (VDK) and the Department for Research and Information on Antisemitism Berlin (RIAS Berlin), on IHRA's working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion and on the triad of demonization, delegitimization and double standards in Israel-related antisemitism.
- In the course of its work, all manifestations of antisemitism (post-Shoah antisemitism, Israel-related antisemitism, modern antisemitism, anti-Judaic antisemitism and antisemitic othering) are documented, regardless of the political-ideological background of the perpetrators.
- The recording and categorization of verified cases in a database provided by the Bundesverband RIAS is mandatory. The categorization system used in the database was developed and scientifically reviewed with the help of the Emil Julius Gumpel Research Department of the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies (MMZ) and the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism (IIBSA).
- Within the framework of the BAG and with the approval of Bundesverband RIAS's scientific advisors, the categories used can be further developed and the database updated accordingly.
- The central reporting portal www.report-antisemitism.de offers multilingual, Internet-based, open-source and device-based accessibility for all Jews and non-Jews affected and witnesses of antisemitism in Germany. In addition, projects ensure that people have access as needed, via telephone, e-mail or in person.
- Contact is made with people reporting incidents in the geographical area of responsibility within 72 hours and, when incidents involve violence or threats of violence, on the first workday after the report is received.

- In order to use the incident database and the Bundesverband RIAS's reporting portal www.report-antisemitism.de, the relevant qualification modules must be completed. The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the data-security guidelines developed by the Bundesverband RIAS must be taken into account and applied.
- A close cooperation is sought with the Jewish communities, and the reporting option is presented to as many Jewish and non-Jewish organizations as possible. In addition, agreements are made to permanently promote the reporting service.
- Referral advice and a case comparison with other civil-society documentation projects are sought. For this purpose, agreements are made with the appropriate local structures. The projects refer those who are seeking advice regarding antisemitic incidents only to responsible bodies and projects that can ensure that they will be treated with sensitivity. In this regard, both a shared understanding of antisemitism based on IHRA's working definition and knowledge about the dangers of secondary victimization are crucial.
- A civil-society reporting center for antisemitic cases should have at least two full-time positions that have participated in the qualification measures provided by the Bundesverband (part-time equivalents are also possible). The project must be able to function and be perceived as an independent project both within the responsible body and in public.
- Projects and employees must act in a discreet and confidential manner, so that the project continues to be accessible to all those affected by antisemitism. This includes remaining cautious in the event of conflicts within the Jewish community and between Jewish communities and other Jewish actors.
- The projects undertake that all employees who accept, verify and record reports in the database take part in Bundesverband RIAS's qualifying courses and send at least one employee to the BAG meetings.
- The public is continuously informed about the results of the civil-society recording in the respective federal states on the basis of the press code. In doing so, the projects are guided by the Bundesverband RIAS's professional standards. Participation in the yearly reports of the Bundesverband RIAS is mandatory.
- The way that the projects and employees express themselves in their roles is based on the results of their work and always in relation to their own expertise. However, the projects are cautious when it comes to political activism (for example, in supporting appeals, petitions and speeches at demonstrations or rallies).

In addition, the BAG agreed to aim for the following desirable requirements:

- The projects participate in BAG work groups.
- In consultation with other civil-society actors and using journalistic means, the projects carry out a systematic monitoring of gatherings that take place in their geographical area of responsibility and at which, because of past events or the contents of a call, explicit or implicit antisemitic statements are to be expected.
- In consultation with other civil-society actors, the projects conduct a systematic monitoring of Internet or social-media sites that are particularly important for one of the documented political-ideological backgrounds in their geographical area of responsibility.
- In order to achieve a comprehensive picture, the reported cases are compared anonymously with the respective state office of criminal investigation or the police headquarters of the respective state police district.

Report antisemitic incidents by phone:

Bavaria	089 122 23 40 60
Berlin	0152 13 36 21 98
Hesse	0151 18 52 27 41 Tuesday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	0381 12 87 85 28 0151 16 92 21 11
Lower Saxony	0159 06 43 21 44
North Rhine-Westphalia	0211 822 66 03 33
Saarland	06851 808 27 91 0151 27 16 42 26
Saxony	0155 66 21 58 18
Saxony-Anhalt	0345 13 18 30 31 0345 13 18 30 36
Schleswig-Holstein	0431 301 40 37 99 Mondays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Thursdays 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Thuringia	03641 271 75 73 0176 71 21 30 04
In other states (free of charge)	0800 032 32 63 Monday – Friday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.



Bundesverband RIAS e.V.
Federal Association of Departments for
Research and Information on Antisemitism

You can report your experiences and
observations of antisemitic incidents at any
time via www.report-antisemitism.de

Bundesverband RIAS on the Internet:

www.report-antisemitism.de

twitter.com/Report_Antisem

facebook.com/BundesverbandRIAS

youtube.com/@riasbundesverband

instagram.com/riasbundesverband

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