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Ministry of Diaspora Affairs  
Creating a common Jewish future

משרד התפוצות | יוצרים עתיד יהודי משותף



# ACMS

## Antisemitism Cyber Monitoring System

### Table of Contents

<i>United States</i> .....	1
<i>France</i> .....	3
<i>Germany &amp; Austria</i> .....	5
<i>Arab World</i> .....	6
<i>Russian Speaking Area</i> .....	8
<i>Latin America</i> .....	9
<i>Additional Incidents</i> .....	10

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## UNITED STATES

### **Yale University Rabbi Brutally Beaten in Antisemitic Robbery**

The Rabbi was standing outside the Yale Chabad House when he was approached by two teenage boys who proceeded to attack him while shouting antisemitic racial slurs and profanities. He survived the attack and though the assailants were arrested, it is unclear if they will be charged with a hate crime.

### **Two Jewish Teenagers in New York Attacked in Antisemitic Ambush**

The attackers yelled antisemitic slurs while throwing sharp objects at the teens. Police are investigating.

### **New York Passes Hate Crime Legislation in Honor of Hanukkah Stabbing Attack Victims**

The state legislature passed a hate crimes act that considers murders committed due to the victims' race or religion as "acts of domestic terrorism." The legislation passed as part of the state budget on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, which also included funding for the State Police Hate Crimes Task Force, established in 2018 to address the increase in antisemitic and bias-motivated threats, harassment, and violence.

### **Idaho State Rep. Claims 'Stay-at-Home' Order "No Different than Nazi Germany"**

In a podcast interview on April 16<sup>th</sup>, Rep. Heather Scott equated Idaho's 'stay-at-home' order to restrictions enforced by Nazi Germany. During the interview, she claimed the restrictions put in place by Idaho's governor were "no different than Nazi Germany where you had government [sic] telling people either you were an essential worker or a non-essential worker, and non-essential workers got put on a train." Scott also claimed that 'people' have been comparing the governor to Adolf Hitler.

### **Coronavirus Antisemitism in ACMS**

According to ACMS, approximately 50% of all antisemitic posts collected which reference the Coronavirus emanate from the United States. An analysis of the posts shows that more than half (54%) contain various conspiracy theories regarding Jews, Zionists, or Israel. The remaining discourse is mostly made up of the Demonization of Israel and both New and Classic forms of Far-Right antisemitism.

### **Coronavirus and the Trivialization of the Holocaust on Social Media**

Social media users have been abusing the memory of Holocaust victims and trivializing Nazi atrocities by comparing them to experiences associated with the Coronavirus, such as 'stay-at-home' restrictions and mandatory quarantine orders. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, "Anne Frank" was trending on Twitter after users started comparing their quarantine experience to hers, with the phrase "Anne Frank challenge."

### **8kun Users Coordinated Antisemitic Zoombombing Campaign**

Following a warning by the FBI that hateful individuals or groups were hijacking, or "Zoombombing," online video-conferences, it was revealed that 8chan users were coordinating antisemitic hijacking campaigns against Jewish schools and synagogues on 8kun (8chan's successive site following its shutdown). A post on the site, which is popular with Far-Right activists, provided links to online classes held on Zoom by teachers at a Philadelphia Jewish school with instructions to join the classes and scare participants with references to the "Boogaloo" (a Far-Right term referencing a future "race war" in the US). Similar Zoombombing campaigns also targeted Jewish organizations, libraries, Holocaust education programs, and more. The calls are usually interrupted with antisemitic imagery and profanity.

### **New Yorker Charged with Harassment for Blaming the Coronavirus on Jews**

A man has been charged with bias intimidation and harassment following two confrontations with a Jewish in New Jersey. The attacker, 30-year-old Afrim Haxhaj, confronted the victim and told him to leave the store while blaming Jews for COVID-19 and purposely “bumping his chest” into the man.

### **Man Accused in Monsey Hannukah Stabbing Attack Declared Mentally Unfit to Stand Trial**

A New York federal judge has ruled that the suspect in a stabbing attack at a Rabbi’s home, which injured four and killed one, won’t stand trial because he is suffering from a mental disease. The judge recommended the suspect, Grafton Thomas, be committed to a treatment facility for up to four months to determine if he can one day stand trial. After the attack, police found handwritten journals belonging to Thomas expressing antisemitic views, including references to Adolf Hitler and ‘Nazi culture.’ He also conducted online searches for “German Jewish Temples near me” and “Zionist Temples.”

### **‘Palestine’ in Arabic Spray-Painted on UMass Hillel on Holocaust Remembrance Day**

The Hillel at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst was vandalized on Holocaust Remembrance Day with red graffiti. The targeting of non-Israeli Jewish institutions in order to call attention to the Palestinian cause is common. An investigation is underway by police in search of the perpetrators.

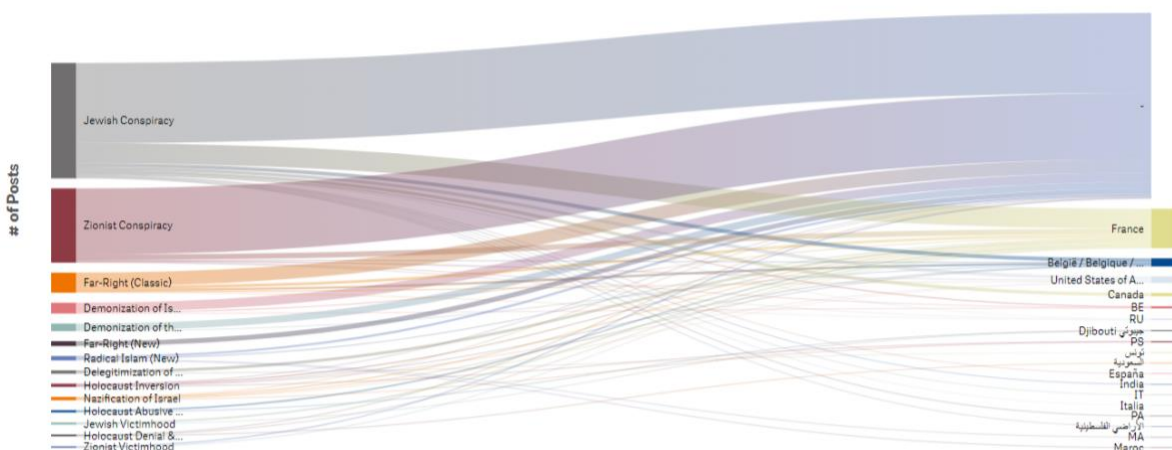
## FRANCE

### Antisemitism 2.0 In the Era Of The Coronavirus Pandemic: The French Case

To what extent does Covid-19 pandemic impact the level of antisemitism? In the real world, French authorities have recorded a crash in the number of antisemitic incidents for March and beginning of April, as a natural consequence of the strict lockdown imposed to the population. In the virtual space, ACMS data indicate that antisemitic discourse referring specifically to the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be relatively confined at the margins, within radical virtual communities structured around well-known French influencers. However, it should be noted that the number of coronavirus-linked antisemitic posts increased by more than 40% between March and April 2020, signaling a worrying upward trend. Similarly, the general level of online antisemitism recorded in French have increased significantly in April, in comparison with March.

#### 1. Typology Of The Coronavirus-Related Antisemitic Hate Speech

The great majority of the antisemitic content referring to the pandemic has been classified as *Conspiracy Theories* by ACMS. Furthermore, a significant proportion of antisemitic messages display sentiments classified as *Classic Far Right* but also as *Demonization of the Jews, Demonization and Delegitimization of Israel.*



Source: ACMS, Section: "SubCategories", Language: "French", Filter: "Coronavirus, Corona, Covid"

#### 2. Characteristics Of Antisemitic Discourse Referring To The Coronavirus

Unsurprisingly, radicals are using the pandemic to incite antisemitic hatred, disseminating century-old conspiracy theories and scapegoating of Jews. Furthermore, the Coronavirus pandemic appears as another exemplification of the modern manifestations of antisemitism "using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism to characterize Israel or Israelis," as defined by the IHRA.

- **Conspiracy Theories Disseminated On Social Medias**

Conspiracy theorists blame Jews, Israel, and Zionists for the spread of the Covid-19, reviving medieval blood libels. Jews are being accused of having created the virus to expand their global domination and

impose a new world order, but also as a means for profit. Former Health Minister Agnès Buzyn and her husband Yves Levy, a professor of clinical immunology and former CEO of the INSERM, are still targeted in a wave of antisemitic posts displaying conspiracy theories. A new theory - involving Yves Lévy - according to which “Jews control the Chinese lab that created Coronavirus” has recently emerged.

- **Demonization of Israel: The Virus Metaphor**



The hashtag **#Covid48**<sup>1</sup> went viral on Twitter in recent days. Indeed, the virus metaphor is widely used to revive hatred against Israel, echoing the “Jewish parasite” antisemitic stereotype. Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority has made multiple statements comparing Israel to the deadly virus itself. It should be noted that French antisemitic virtual communities often echo Palestinian narrative. The Coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

- **Extreme Right-Wing Online Activism Scapegoating Jews**

The pandemic appears as another demonstration of the extent of online activism emanating from ultra-nationalist circles. Indeed, ACMS classification data shows that antisemitic sentiments connected to the *Classic Far Right* subcategory is prevalent. However, the gap between their marginal proportion in the French society - in terms of numbers<sup>2</sup> and influence – and their overrepresentation in the antisemitic virtual space should be noted. Furthermore, ultra-nationalist activists disseminate mostly classic antisemitic conspiracy theories on social networks. The most prevalent libel which proliferate within those virtual communities is that “Globalist Jews” created the virus to impose a new world order. Many are accusing prominent French Jewish intellectual and Economic theorist Jacques Attali and billionaire philanthropist Georges Soros of being behind the outbreak as part of their plan to advance the “Great Replacement” of the white European population.

- **“Zoom Bombing”, A New Form Of Online Antisemitism?**

Several online Holocaust memorial events have been “Zoom bombed” with antisemitic slogans, photos of Adolf Hitler and pedo-pornography.

<sup>1</sup> #Covid48 is a contraction of Covid-19 and 1948, a reference to the Israeli declaration of independence (May 14, 1948)

<sup>2</sup> A parliamentary report estimated there are 3000 ultra-Nationalists in France (June 2019).

## GERMANY & AUSTRIA

### German Government Outlaws All Hezbollah Activities

Shifting from the EU's policy, which artificially differentiates between the group's military and political activities, the Interior Ministry announced a ban on all Hezbollah activities on April 30<sup>th</sup>. That same morning, police raided Hezbollah-affiliated mosques and cultural associations throughout Germany. Hezbollah has been raising and channeling funds through Germany to advance its efforts abroad.

### Coronavirus and Antisemitism on Social Media

ACMS shows a clear rise in the amount of antisemitic posts and videos referencing the Coronavirus, although the extent is still limited. The most common types of antisemitic posts relate to different forms of conspiracy theories. 77.4% of the posts are Classic conspiracy theories, mainly claiming that the Jews invented and are profiting from the Coronavirus.

### German Conspiracy Theorists Adopting American Blood Libel

A modern blood libel conspiracy theory originating in the US has gained popularity among German social media users. The theory claims that Jews kidnap, torture, and kill children to use their blood in order to produce adrenochrome for an alleged anti-aging product.

### Coronavirus and the Trivialization of the Holocaust

"Corona Deniers" and conspiracy theorists compare Coronavirus government policies to the antisemitic policies of the Nazi regime and themselves to the Jews during the Holocaust, and thus abuse the memory of Holocaust victims and trivialize Nazi atrocities. Some examples:

- Austria: On April 24<sup>th</sup>, at a rally against the government's Coronavirus restrictions, demonstrators shouted "We are the Jews," expressed conspiracy theories, and trampled on the Holocaust memorial of the "street-washing Jew." Some 200 people, among them well-known right-wing extremists such as Martin Sellner, took part in the rally.
- Germany: On April 8<sup>th</sup>, in an application to the Federal Constitutional Court, attorney Beate Bahner claimed "fearmongering" by the German government is equivalent to Nazi propaganda and compared the ban of visiting the old and sick to the "persecution and murder of Jews...in the Third Reich."
- The online shop *politauflkleber.de* sells buttons featuring the yellow star with the inscription "unvaccinated." The description of the product states: "Soon the unvaccinated are the Jews of today. Soon they will be hunted by the media..."



### Zoombombing Attacks Targeted Jewish Events on Holocaust Memorial Day

At least seven events hosted by various groups throughout Germany, including Synagogue services, Torah lessons, commemoration events, and survivors' testimonies were Zoombombed by neo-Nazis on Yom Hashoah. They called for the death of Jews, drew swastikas, posted pornographic material, and shouted antisemitic obscenities.

### Wiesbaden Court Ruled Antisemitic Post is Covered by Freedom of Expression

The Wiesbaden Prosecution dismissed a lawsuit against a user who published a Facebook post speaking of the Jews as "Herrenmenschen" (members of the master race), and of Israel as "Zionist terror state."

## ARAB WORLD

### Antisemitic Tone of Palestinian Side Expressed by Fatah Officials in Light of the Corona Crisis

The Corona epidemic also reached the Palestinian areas and mainly hit the West Bank. The first wave hit mainly the Bethlehem area and came with tour groups. The second wave hit especially the rural areas of Ramallah and Hebron. The source of the epidemic in the second wave is probably Palestinian workers who worked in Israel and in the settlements.

Against this backdrop, the PA has taken a number of precautionary measures such as closing border crossings and banning settlements. The last step was also accompanied by national reasons. At the beginning of the crisis in March, a video was posted containing an Israeli soldier spitting on a Palestinian vehicle. Palestinian social media were quick to claim that in the spitting act, the soldier tried to infect Palestinians with the Coronavirus. Prime Minister Mahmoud's wife echoed support for his Twitter account. Later, on April 13<sup>th</sup>, Fatah spokesman Osama al-Qawasma accused Israel of supporting the spread of the Coronavirus in East Jerusalem. This is in light of the conflict between Israel and the authority over the responsibility for combating the virus in East Jerusalem and arresting some of the authorities involved in disinfecting areas in the city. Kawasma added that "the Israeli government has caused the virus to spread more easily in West Bank cities, among other things, to maintain economic dependence." The same spokesman added that Israel would soon quit because Jews love money.

It is important to note that exceptional statements and cooperation between the three parties (Israel - the West Bank, Israel-Hamas in Gaza) is relatively successful.

Fatah spokesman's charge of spreading the Coronavirus by Israel to East Jerusalem: [https://www.alhayat-j.com/ar\\_page.php?id=4cd8a6dy80579181Y4cd8a6d](https://www.alhayat-j.com/ar_page.php?id=4cd8a6dy80579181Y4cd8a6d)

Accusations by PA government spokesman Ibrahim Halam: <https://palwatch.org/page/17802>

Palestinian Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh's Wife Compares Israel to Coronavirus: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=196993244983014>

### Shiite Antisemitism

Shiite antisemitism in Arabic is a unique phenomenon that should be pointed out. It is most prominent in two centers: Lebanon and Yemen (among Houthi supporters). It is less evident in other Shiite centers in the Arab world such as Iraq and the Persian Gulf countries. The source of inspiration is Iran, but also an interpretation of Islamic and Shiite origins.

The slogan of the Houthi movement in Yemen, taken from the words of the movement's founder Bader Aladdin Houthi, is "death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews and victory to Islam!" This slogan is used daily on social media.

In addition, one of the Shi'a slogans regarding the Land of Israel is the "Spider House". This description can be widely used in Nasrallah's speeches as he has over the years described Israel as weaker than the spider webs. Also, Hezbollah's "Al-Manar" channel has published a series of several episodes called "The Spider House" and it deals with the identity crisis in Israeli society. As a result, many Muslims of Shiite



origin. This phrase is used on social networks to describe Israel as weaker than the original spider. The prime example is the ease with which Israeli borders can be breached from Lebanon.

An example chapter from the "Al-Manar" editorial that discusses what is happening in Israel and compares Israel to a spider: <https://program.almanar.com.lb/episode/23377>

It is sometimes a conspiracy of anti-Semitism expressed by Shiite speakers. For example, Dr. Hadi Issa Dulul, a Shi'ite Lebanese nuclear scientist, appeared on April 4 in an interview with Syrian television station Al-Aghabarya, with Iran's flag and Khomeini's image behind his back, accusing the Jews of evading the post-Corona economic crisis, as evaded by the attack. In the Twin Towers.

<https://www.memri.org/tv/lebanese-nuclear-physicist-hadi-dalloul-jews-9-11-coronavirus-economic-collapse-sidelines>

### **Glorifying Hitler on his Birthday on Holocaust Day**

During Holocaust Remembrance Day there is a glorification in the image of Adolf Hitler, many users in the Arab world often talk about Hitler praising him and even sharing a photo while saluting. Below is an example of on a page with 585.8K followers that brings news from the Arab world that marked Hitler's birthday and greatness with a photo: "On this day, 131 years ago, Nazi German politician Adolf Hitler, one of the most influential figures in human history, was born."

<https://twitter.com/ScreenMix/status/1252213580478496775>

### **TV Series Receive Antisemitic Reactions on Social Media During Ramadan**

"Aaron's Mother"—A Kuwaiti TV series that aired in Ramchan 2020, featuring actors and actresses from the Persian Gulf countries. The series describes the relationship between the Muslim, Christian, and Kuwait Jewish communities in the 1940's and shows the discrimination suffered by the Jewish community and the injustices they suffered during the establishment of the state and how they coped with such treatment after their deportation. So far, this series has swept anti-Israeli reactions on social networks, claiming it brings with it an act of normalization between Israel and the Gulf states. Example of an antisemitic reaction on twitter: <https://twitter.com/HawayQ/status/1253354863959957506> Bassam Naim, who is close to Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniya, addressed the series and claimed that it is a historic crime:

<https://www.khaberni.com/news/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84-%D8%A3%D9%85-%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-344795>



## RUSSIAN SPEAKING AREAS

### Antisemitic Incidents

7.4.20—Israeli court postponed the transfer of the Saint Alexander's Church in Jerusalem to the Russian authorities, causing angry reaction of the Russian conservative press and social networks, including anti-Semitic allusions.

9.4.20—A member of the Ukrainian parliament, Nikita Potoraev, posted a "Passover blessing" which included anti-Semitic manifestation.

12.4.20—A plan of raising a monument in a memory of Ivan Shcheglovitov in the city Starodub in the Bryansk province in Russia was accepted. The plan was submitted by some local high school students. Scheglovitov was born in area, he was a minister of justice in the Russian empire, and one of the initiators of the "Beilis trail" in 1911. The initiator of raising the monument is the prosecutor of Bryansk area, Alexander Witovich.

13.4.20—A synagogue in the city of Arkhangelsk was set on fire. Unknown person climbed over a fence of the local Jewish center and started a fire by lighting few tiers. The building was damaged. This is the third attempt to hit the local Jewish center (previous ones were in 2015 and 2016).

20.4.20—Molotov cocktail was thrown on synagogue in Kherson, Ukraine. The building was lightly damaged.

24.4.20—A Parson, Sergei Romanov, who is considered to be close to some Russian parliament members. Delivered an anti-Semitic sermon, in which he accused the Jews of killing Russian patriarch Alexei the second, spreading the Corona Virus and closing of churches. In his speech he offered to exile the Jews. In response, the official Church forbade him to deliver sermons.

## LATIN AMERICA

### Argentina—News Reporter Accused the “Rich People” from Israel and the US of the Coronavirus

During an actuality program in C5N channel, a channel ideologically associated with the Argentine government, a chief correspondent stated to the viewers that "The rich people from Israel, the US and Europe are controlling of your life and responsible for spreading the Corona virus". The association of Jewish Communities in Argentina (DAIA) and the Government organization Against Discrimination and Racism (INADI) condemned the journalist's statements and he had to apologize live the following day.

### Argentina—Antisemitic Zoombombing Attack on Virtual Holocaust Memorial Ceremony

During a virtual ceremony commemorating the Holocaust Memorial Day by a local Jewish newspaper, representatives of the Meretz party in Argentina, the Jewish Agency and the Hashomer Hatzair organization in the Zoom app, a cyber-attack was held from two different accounts. The attackers presented Nazi symbols and child pornography. The Argentine national organization against discrimination and racism (INADI) condemned the event

### Venezuela—Multiple Articles with Significant Antisemitic Content on Government Site *Telesur*

As usual, the Venezuelan government's news portal continues to regularly publish articles with clear anti-Semitic content and criticism towards the Israeli government and the right of existence of the State

of Israel. During April, a number of articles can be cited: Call for the end of the blockade of Cuba Iran and Palestine, Israel's responsibility of sabotaging the Palestinian Authority efforts to fight against the Corona virus, condemn of IDF and settlers attacks in Palestinian territories during the Palestinian effort to suppress the virus's spread. Also columnist PABLO JOFRE REAL published two columns with one entitled: "Manipulation and Disinformation as a Zionist Strategy."

**Brazil—High Schoolers Used Nazi Salute in Support of Student’s Spokesman Candidacy**

This case took place at a high school in the city of Recife. The students were suspended from school for a week. The school administration responded to the case, stating: "We apologize to anyone who was affected. Our school does not accept any conduct that contradicts Christian and ethical values regarding to life and respect for all races, peoples and beliefs".

## ADDITIONAL INCIDENTS

### Antisemitic Social Media Campaign Compares Israel to Coronavirus

A pro-Palestinian campaign using the hashtag “Covid48,” which is a combination of “Covid-19” and “1948,” has gained traction on Twitter. Posts demonizing Israel were usually accompanied by cartoons comparing the country to the virus and calling for its eradication. Equating Israel to a virus has deep roots in Classic antisemitic discourse and is reminiscent of multiple incidents throughout history where Jews as a whole were likened to viruses, bacteria, or parasites, or were falsely accused or blamed for their spread. The campaign, which appears to have first gained popularity in Arabic, expanded to English and French speaking Twitter users, who often echo the Palestinian narrative. It should be noted that English posts containing the antisemitic hashtag peaked on Holocaust Remembrance Day.



## United Kingdom

### London Woman Threw Bricks at Jews While Shouting “Kill All the Jews”

Police are investigating an April 6<sup>th</sup> incident in which a woman chased Jews while throwing bricks and shouting antisemitic obscenities.

### London Synagogue Targeted with Antisemitic Zoombombing Campaign During Virtual Services

A Friday night service was infiltrated by Far-Right extremists who wrote racist antisemitic messages on the call’s message board. It appears one “uninvited guest” who hacked the call was able to admit almost 40 antisemites into the virtual services, who then proceeded to unleash “vile abuse” to congregants.

### London Live Interview with Antisemite David Icke Sparks Controversy and Ofcom Investigation

Ofcom, the UK’s communications regulator, has sanctioned London Live for broadcasting an interview in which the conspiracy theorist aired “potentially harmful” views about the coronavirus pandemic during an 80-minute interview broadcasted April 8<sup>th</sup>. Icke used the broadcast to claim the pandemic was cover for a “global world order to purposefully crash the economy, end the use of cash payments, and track every individual.” He also suggested the impact of the crisis could be linked to geopolitical differences between Israel and the west. London Live has respected Ofcom’s ruling and apologized.

## Germany

### Amazon’s Site in Germany Sells Antisemitic Book

*Amazon.de* is promoting the sale of the German book *The Rothschilds: A Family that Controls the World*. The book claims, inter alia, that the “bloodthirsty” Rothschild family controls the world, financed the Nazis, and aims at “an all-devastating Third World War and a world government controlled from Jerusalem.” Despite protests from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the book is still available.