



**Jewish Community  
Relations Council**

**MILWAUKEE**  
JEWISH FEDERATION

March 24, 2022

### **2021 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents**

All incidents have been corroborated

The Jewish Community Relations Council's 2021 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents indicates an overall minor decrease in reported incidents but some troubling trends.

The audit includes 95 reported and corroborated incidents, which reflects a 4% decrease from 2020.

Geographical considerations: Our reporting includes events that occur in the State of Wisconsin, are committed by persons residing in the State of Wisconsin, relate to Wisconsin institutions, relate to or specifically respond to Wisconsin persons, and/or would otherwise go unreported if not reported within our audit.

#### **Trends**

- Middle School and High School activity (80% increase)
- Covid-19 and pandemic conspiracies or comparisons (46% increase)
- Holocaust minimalization and comparisons (30% increase)
- Social media activity (30% increase)
- Harassment, threats, and assaults (5% increase)
- Pejorative references to Israel and Zionism in an antisemitic context (5% increase)
- Expression (3% decrease)
- Conspiracy theories (21% decrease)
- College and University activity (42% decrease)

#### **Middle School and High School:**

2020 saw an increase in both middle school (2 in 2020, 3 in 2021) and high school (3 in 2020, 6 in 2021) incidents, many of them ranging around Holocaust jokes or direct harassment of Jewish students.

Some examples:

- A middle school student repeatedly made the heil Hitler gesture to a Jewish student.
- A high school student wrote "Burn Jews" on the whiteboard.
- A swastika and the n word were scratched into the wall at a high school.
- Teens in a Snapchat group sent videos to a Jewish teen stating, "Face the wall Jew" and "Congratulations you finally found your chance to pull your victim card. How does it feel? You're a Jew, must be great. F\*\*k your people."

### **Covid-19 and pandemic conspiracies or comparisons:**

With the start of the global pandemic in 2020 there emerged conspiracies of Jewish or Israeli involvement with spreading or creating Covid-19, and in 2021 we saw an increase in these conspiracies spread through social media.

Some examples:

- A flyer was distributed stating, “Every single aspect of the covid agenda is Jewish” was given to a student at Kenosha Tremper High School as well as found on residential driveways. The flyer including a list of CDC staff, covid advisors, and vaccine scientists all marked as being Jewish and ended with “Remember...those who argue that ‘if you’re against lockdowns, you’re against state power’ were literally Shabbos goy carrying out the will of the Jews, wittingly or unwittingly.”
- A comment made on the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department’s Facebook post about vaccine numbers showed a swastika made of arms giving themselves a vaccine.

### **Holocaust minimalization and comparisons:**

Holocaust denial has always been clear cut antisemitism, but increasingly we have seen Holocaust minimalization which is just as dangerous as it desensitizes people to the horrific acts of the Holocaust. In 2021 we saw an increase in minimizing the scope, impact, and severity of the Holocaust. During the pandemic we also saw the comparison of the mask and vaccine requirements and the lockdown to the Holocaust often times for political or opinioned statements.

Some examples:

- Comments were made on the WISN 12 News post for Holocaust Remembrance Day that included: “Sure as soon as yall remember ‘REAL’ holocaust... gtf0h”
- A message sent to a Jewish institution’s Facebook page that said “Happy Holocaust” with pictures of emaciated Jews in concentration camps from the Holocaust.
- Comments made on a video of the Holocaust Education Bill Signing include: "Ever wondered why they keep pushing the lie?", "Indoctrination bill", "Claiming the right to be, and feel eternally victimized", "Remember they are a tiny opressed [sic] minority with no power", "What's this? A bill to ban history and teach their-story instead?"
- Milwaukee Local shared a picture of the Auschwitz train station with the caption "The horrific truth is...if people were told to get into boxcars to be taken to 'virus protection camps' many of them would rush to get in line" with the added comments "People have forgotten history. Are you that blind you cannot see history repeating itself? #WakeUp".
- At a protest against vaccine mandates several people had signs comparing vaccine requirements to the Holocaust. Including a sign with a yellow star of David that said “unvaccinated” and “Mandated experimental drugs is Nazism”.

### **Harassment, threats, and assaults:**

There was a small increase between 2020 and 2021, continuing the trend over the past few years of the incidences of direct, personal acts of antisemitism increasing (from 6 in 2016, 15 in 2017, 16 in 2018, 40

in 2019, 22 in 2020). This trend points to a shift in how people express their antisemitic sentiments. The number may have gone down but the incidents are more severe, they are bolder, more open, more personal, and more threatening.

Some examples:

- A man chased three Orthodox Jewish community members yelling “I know who you are! I know you worship Yahweh!”
- Protestors stood outside a synagogue during Friday night services angrily shouting about Jews, Israel, and the Rabbi.
- A Jewish woman was asked “Eres Judia o eres Jodida?!” which translates to “Are you Jewish or just f\*\*\*\*d up?!”
- A Jewish institution received a message titled “F\*\*k you, kikes” and stated “Considering jews only 2% of population, and that most of those are secular, non-observant jews, jew holiday relevant to an even tinier proportion of the population. What’s next? School to be chastised for opening on some Haitian voodoo holiday too? Maybe you kikes should go to university in Israel if your millions of stupid holidays are so critical. This is not Israel. This is not a jew country, you oven-dodging kikes.”
- A Jewish institution received 100 messages from the same person with topics ranging from Jewish power, antisemitic conspiracies, Holocaust denial, replacement theory, and Zionist control.
- A man wearing a Star of David necklace was shoved while being cursed at for being a Jew.

### **Pejorative references to Israel and Zionism:**

This audit recognizes the legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism. Not all anti-Israel activity is antisemitism. Generally, such activity crosses the line when all Jews are held responsible for the actions of Israel; when Israel is denied the right to exist as a Jewish state and equal member of the global community; and when traditional antisemitic symbols, images, or theories are used (Source: ADL).

In 2021, the number of incidents making pejorative references to Israel and Zionism rose 5% from the year prior, with the majority of the incidents happened in May during the conflict in Israel.

Some examples:

- A comment made locally on social media “Israel has one of the strongest armies in the world. They also control a lot of the world and politics.”
- A comment on a local news story “why would anyone support the greedy money hungry Jews? DEFUND ISRAEL! no more Israel is a great thing #FUKJews”
- An email to a Jewish institution, “Don’t know one care about a jew holocaust this is America. The only holocaust that matters on this land is the native America one. Jewish business belongs in Israel not here Jewish lobbyist have corrupted our law and all Jews need to be live in Israel. American will turn on all Jews and Israel. Get the f\*\*k of our land.” [all errors from original]
- Bike path was spray painted with the phrase "Free the USA from Zionist Control" in two locations.

- A comment was made on a Jewish community gathering social media post that included a photo of emaciated Jews from a Nazi death camp with the accompanying text “These are the current Israeli terrorist forces.”

Notes:

There was a decrease in Expression, conspiracy theories, and college incidents but all were still elevated in comparison to years past. Please remember that this is a snapshot of antisemitism in Wisconsin and even decreases do not distract from the overarching upward trend of incidents.

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*The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation envisions a just community that reflects American and Jewish values. The mission is to speak as the representative of the Jewish community on issues of public affairs and public policy by convening and mobilizing the Jewish community through education, advocacy, social justice, and support for Israel.*

*The JCRC conducts an annual audit of antisemitic incidents in Wisconsin to maintain accurate and consistent reporting, evaluate trends, educate the public, and empower individuals to help stop the spread of antisemitism and all forms of hate.*