United States / ADL Audit

The total number of anti-Semitic incidents in the United States increased by 21 percent in 2014 in a year marked by a violent anti-Semitic shooting attack targeting Jewish community buildings in Kansas and anti-Jewish expressions linked to the war in Gaza.

The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, issued today, counted a total of **912 anti-Semitic incidents** across the U.S. during the 2014 calendar year. This represents a **21 percent increase** from the 751 incidents reported during the same period in 2013, and is the first time in nearly a decade of declines where the overall number of incidents has substantially risen.

"While the overall number of anti-Semitic incidents remains lower than we have seen historically, the fact remains that 2014 was a particularly violent year for Jews both overseas and in the United States," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director. "The fatal shootings in Overland Park, Kansas at a Jewish community center building and senior residence by a white supremacist whose goal was to "kill Jews" and other violent episodes were tragic reminders that lethal anti-Semitism continues to pose a threat to American Jews and larger society as well."

Despite the increase in incidents, the total number of anti-Semitic acts still represents one of the lowest totals of anti-Semitic acts reported by ADL since it started keeping records in 1979. Still, the Audit has also identified new trends in anti-Semitic incidents, including the phenomenon of hacking attacks on community and synagogue websites by overseas hackers, which multiplied in 2014.

The 2014 calendar year was marked by several violent episodes – most notably, the shooting attack at two Jewish institutional buildings in Overland Park, Kansas carried out by a white supremacist who admitted in a jailhouse interview that he wanted to target and kill Jews. It was the first time a Jewish institution has been singled out by a lone-wolf-style gunman since the 2009 shooting at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The ADL Audit cited a marked increase in anti-Semitic incidents during the 50 days of conflict between Hamas and Israel beginning with air raids on July 7 and into the subsequent ground invasion in Gaza to root out Hamas rockets and tunnels. Anti-Semitism manifested on the fringe of anti-Israel movements during and after Israel's Operation Protective Edge as Jewish individuals and institutions became the targets of anti-Semitic rhetoric and acts of vandalism.

The annual ADL Audit encompasses incidents of assault, vandalism and harassment targeting Jews and Jewish property and institutions and includes both criminal and non-criminal incidents reported to ADL's 27 regional offices across the country and to law enforcement.

In 2014, anti-Semitic incidents were reported in a total of 38 states and the District of Columbia. Those incidents are categorized in the ADL Audit as follows:

- Assaults: 36 incidents in 2014, compared with 31 in 2013;
- Vandalism: 363 incidents in 2014, compared with 315 in 2013;
- Harassment, threats and events: 513 incidents in 2014, compared with 405 in 2013.

"The reported increase in U.S. anti-Semitic incidents coincided with a huge upsurge in anti-Semitic attacks in Europe and elsewhere around the globe," said Barry Curtiss-Lusher, ADL National Chair. "A number of Jewish communities, including those in France, Great Britain and Austria reported a doubling of anti-Semitic incidents over the previous year due to the conflict between Israel and Hamas. While the Jewish community here did not experience anything like the attacks overseas, the Gaza war did have an impact in terms of creating a momentary spike in incidents in the U.S."

The Numbers: State-by-State

Continuing a consistent trend for many years, the states with the highest totals of anti-Semitic incidents were those with large Jewish populations. Once again, New York and California topped the list:

- **New York State**, with 231 incidents in 2014, up from 203 in 2013;
- **California**, with 184 incidents, up from 143;
- **New Jersey**, with 107 incidents, up from 78;
- **Florida**, with 70 incidents, up from 68;
- **Pennsylvania,** with 48 incidents, up from 43
- **Massachusetts**, with 47 incidents, up from 46.

The complete list of state-by-state figures is available on the Anti-Defamation League's website: http://www.adl.org/.

Anti-Semitic Activity during the Gaza War

Jewish individuals and institutions in the U.S. became targets of anti-Semitism during the Gaza war. There were 139 anti-Semitic incidents recorded in July, a substantial increase from the 54 incidents in July 2013. There were another 116 reported incidents in August, up from the 56 in August 2013. And there were 92 anti-Semitic incidents reported in September, up from 58 incidents in September 2013.

While the ADL Audit does not include criticism of Israel or Zionism, such reports are included when they cross the line from legitimate criticism to anti-Semitism by invoking classic anti-Jewish stereotypes or inappropriate Nazi imagery and/or analogies.

Public expressions of anti-Israel sentiments that demonize Jews or create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation by targeting Jewish individuals or institutions in the U.S. are counted. Such anti-Semitism was evident at many of the anti-Israel demonstrations held in cities throughout the U.S.   Here are some examples of incidents linked to the Gaza conflict:

- Lowell, Massachusetts: A synagogue was vandalized with the words "Free Palestine" and "God Bless Gaza" spray painted in red on white marble. (July)
- Malibu, California: Phrases such as "Jews=Killers" and "Jews are Killing Innocent Children" were found near the entrance to a Jewish summer camp. (July)
- Boca Raton, Florida: A doctor asked if his patient was Jewish. She answered yes. The doctor responded by saying that the Jews "killed Jesus" and that current events in Israel were the result of the Jews killing Jesus. (July)
- Chicago, Illinois: Anti-Semitic leaflets, which threatened violence if Israel did not pull out of Gaza, were left on cars in a predominantly Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. (July)
- North Miami Beach: A synagogue was spray painted with swastikas and the word "Hamas" on its front entrance. (July)
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin: An anti-Israel rally outside of a synagogue chanted slogans such as "Jews and Nazis are the same; only difference is the name!" and "Hey Yid, go home!" Some protesters also threw coins at the feet of people approaching the synagogue. (July)
- Potomac, Maryland: A man received a call at 3:00 AM during which the caller threatened his life if he did not remove the Israeli flag outside his business and made a number of anti-Semitic comments. The caller called again moments later and continued the anti-Semitic rant. (August)

The ADL Audit reported an uptick in the number of online attacks by foreign hackers targeting the websites of synagogues and other Jewish organizations.
"Jewish websites in the U.S. have become a common target for hacker groups in the Arab and Muslim world," said Mr. Curtiss-Lusher. "While past hacking efforts against Jewish institutions have mainly focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the more recent attacks are being carried out in the name of the Islamic State."

The following is a list of selected incidents in 2014 where Jewish institutions in the U.S. were targeted by hackers or other institutions were targeted with anti-Semitic messaging:

- Albany, New York: A Jewish high school had its homepage hacked to display threatening anti-Israel messaging along with a Palestinian flag. (February)
- Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Georgia: The Moroccan Ghosts, a politically motivated hacker group that targets the websites of Jewish institutions in the United States, defaced the websites of four Jewish institutions belonging to the Union for Reform Judaism. The hackers defaced the websites with an image of an individual wrapped in a Palestinian flag and a statement saying, "When injustice becomes law … Resistance becomes a duty." A statement boasting about this latest cyber-attack on the Moroccan Ghosts Facebook page read: "Hacking 4 formal Zionist temples in America or in more accurate words…dirty places to conspire and plot against Palestine." (May)
- Plantation, Florida: As Jews were celebrating the holiday of Sukkot, a hacker group calling itself "Team System Dz" attacked a temple website, redirecting visitors to a page with messages expressing support for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.
- California, Oregon, Utah, Missouri, Massachusetts: The hacker group AnonGhost claimed responsibility for the hacking of several American universities' websites. The hackings redirected website visitors either to pages playing a recording of the Quran and featuring a message in English that starts with the statement, "Death to All Jews…Viva Hamas, Qassam" or to a page featuring anti-Israel images and playing a song with the lyrics, "Teach the son of the Jewish woman how many times we will conquer him." (December)

General anti-Jewish expressions on the Internet, while possibly playing a role in fomenting real-world anti-Semitism, are not counted for the purposes of the Audit unless they target a specific individual or institution.

> "We know that online hate remains a serious problem, particularly on social media, where anti-Semitic hashtags such as "#HitlerWasRight" and other offensive messages became trends during the last year," said Mr. Foxman." We have challenged Internet and social media providers to address this issue head on, and will continue to work with our partners in the industry to help them adopt community standards that will shut down hateful, racist and offensive speech before it goes viral."