



SMASH THE  
RACIST  
JEW  
NAZIS!

# ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

January-June 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- CST recorded **1,308 antisemitic incidents** across the UK in the first six months of 2021, **the highest total reported to CST in the January-June period of any year. This is an increase of 49%** from the 875 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first half of 2020, which was the third-highest figure reported to CST in the January to June period. CST recorded 911 antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2019, 810 from January to June 2018, and 786 in the first six months of 2017.<sup>1</sup>
- This record figure is **due to the spike in anti-Jewish hate reported during and in the aftermath of the escalation in violence in Israel and Palestine.** In May 2021, the month when the conflict in the Middle East intensified, **639 antisemitic incidents were reported to CST, the highest ever monthly total recorded.** It is more than the second- and third-highest monthly totals combined, reported in July and August 2014 when the last serious exacerbation in Israel-related hostilities occurred, with 317 and 229 incidents respectively. Trigger events in the Middle East impact diaspora Jewish communities, and the consequent rises in reported antisemitism in the UK show this.<sup>2</sup>
- May alone accounts for 49% of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half

1 The incident totals for past years and months in this report may differ from those previously published by CST, due to the late reporting of some incidents to CST by incident victims, witnesses or other sources. Figures published in this report are also subject to change for the same reason.

2 An in-depth report on the extent of the antisemitism reported during and in the aftermath of the escalation of violence in the Middle East can be found in CST's research briefing, [The Month of Hate: Antisemitism & extremism during the Israel-Gaza conflict](#)

of 2021, and would, on its own, constitute a record half-year tally in every year prior to 2017. **The 1,308 figure would be a record annual total in every year prior to 2016.** January to June 2021 sustains and augments the pattern of historically high antisemitic incident totals recorded in recent years, with more than 100 incidents recorded in five of the first six months of 2021. By way of comparison, CST only recorded monthly totals surpassing 100 incidents on six occasions in the decade between January 2006 and March 2016.<sup>3</sup>

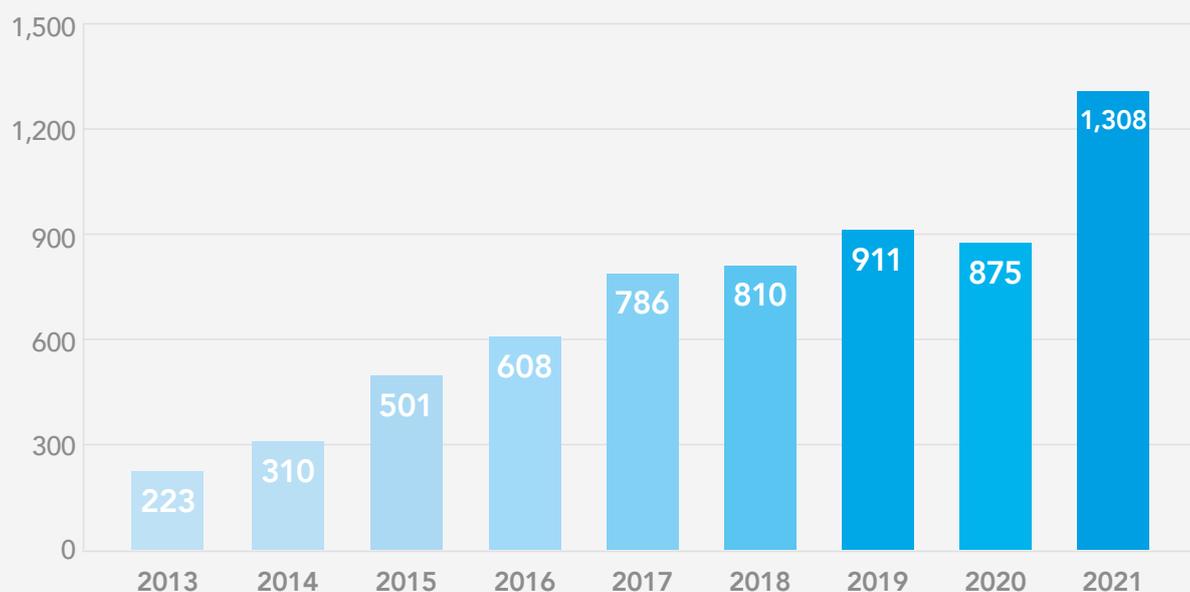
- The surge in incidents correlating with conflict in the Middle East also happened at a time when COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. In May, the UK entered Step 3 of its pandemic response: most businesses were allowed to open, the number of attendees permitted at significant events was raised, most legal controls on meeting others outdoors were lifted, and two households were able to meet indoors.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that the loosening of social regulations, coinciding with the war between Israel and Hamas – a subject that triggers strong emotional responses – **provided people with a potential release from months of lockdown-induced frustration.** These factors may have fed into the extent of the rise in antisemitic incident reports during this period.
- A feature of lockdown measures easing was the reopening of schools in March, and Jewish

3 On five of these six occasions when the monthly total surpassed 100, it was mainly due to reactions to Israel-related conflicts. The outlier of this group, January 2015, was the month of an anti-Jewish terrorist attack in Paris.

4 COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>

Cover image: Abuse written on a housing unit in London, June

## NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, JANUARY-JUNE, 2013-2021



schoolchildren and teachers were particularly targeted with antisemitism when the conflict in the Middle East flared up. **There were 21 incidents recorded at Jewish schools in the first six months of 2021**, compared to four in the first half of 2020. An additional 29 incidents involved Jewish schoolchildren away from school, often on their way to or from home, compared to 12 incidents of this type reported across the same period last year. Eighty incidents involved Jewish schoolchildren or staff at non-faith schools, rising considerably from the six reported from January to June 2020. This results in a total of 130 incidents affecting people and buildings in the school sector, the most reported in the first half of any year, **constituting a sharp increase of 491% from the 22 such incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020**. Of these, 92 took place in May.

- It is unusual for such a high proportion of school-related incidents to take place at non-faith schools: in total, **62% of all school-related incidents were at non-faith schools, 60 of which happened in May**. For comparison, from January to June 2020 27% of school-related incidents

were at non-faith schools and the figure was 19% in the corresponding timeframe in 2019. CST supported many schoolchildren and teachers who felt isolated and fearful of returning to their place of education and work. It shows the impact of a trigger event in the Middle East, with Jewish people facing extreme backlash for Israel's alleged actions in places where they are a small minority. This, in some ways, is a microcosm of the Jewish community's experience in the UK throughout and since the period of intensified conflict between Israel and Hamas.

- Schools were not the only educational facilities where a spike in antisemitism was noted in relation to events in Israel and Gaza. From January to June 2021, there were 84 antisemitic incidents in which the victims or offenders were students or academics, or which involved student unions or other student bodies. Of these, 57 occurred in May. **Once again, this is the highest number of campus-related incidents recorded in the first half of any year, and an increase of 200% from the 28 incidents of this kind reported over the same timeframe in 2020**.

- The upswing in antisemitism observed in the school and university sectors is a microcosm of the increase recorded across the country, and serves as an illustration of how circumstances in the Middle East can dominate social discourse across different age groups and sectors of society. It also demonstrates how related discussion can slip into antisemitic hate speech. **The most prevalent single type of rhetoric evident in antisemitic incidents over the first six months of 2021 referenced Israel and Palestine, demonstrated anti-Zionist motivation, or both; this type of rhetoric was present on 693 occasions.** This is an increase compared with 151 in the first half of 2020 – a year without a significant trigger event in the Middle East. This includes instances where the subject matter was mentioned directly (e.g. shouts of “Free Palestine” at visibly Jewish people), where there were explicit calls for the destruction of Israel made at Jews, and cases where the motive was obvious by context and intention (e.g. cars draped in Palestinian flags driving and making noise through Jewish communities). Of these, 43 directly compared Israel with Nazis, while the terms “Zionism” or “Zionist” were employed in 68 incidents, often as euphemisms for “Jewishness” and “Jew”.
- The way that reactions to the conflict sparked a wave of antisemitic incidents also reflects a wider trend of antisemitism following the news cycle, latching onto whatever story is prevalent in politics and media as an avenue for its expression. Issues as divisive as the conflict in the Middle East in fact seem to unite antisemites across the social, political and ideological spectra, and discourses emanate from unexpected sources. For example, **31 of the 51 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the first half of 2021 that contained comments glorifying the Holocaust took place in May and June, made in response to Israel’s actions.** Pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel sentiment is often assumed to stem predominantly from the left wing, but these 31 cases championed far-right, fascistic antisemitic values and actions. It underlines the fluidity of contemporary anti-Jewish hate, where certain ideas are embedded and spouted by offenders of multiple, disparate identities and worldviews.
- **The 355 online incidents of antisemitism are the second-highest total for online incidents that CST has ever recorded in the first six months of a year,** falling 2% from the 364 incidents of this kind from January to June 2020. They constitute 27% of this year’s total so far, compared to 42% of 2020’s six-monthly figure. While the number of individual cases of online abuse has remained relatively steady, it is perhaps surprising that it has not increased at the rate of offline incidents, especially given that much of the conversation regarding events in Israel and Palestine was held on social media platforms. Nevertheless, online discourse and the way that information is spread on these virtual forums influenced the volume of offline incidents recorded by CST. When there is online incitement to extreme levels of anger and hatred over Israel, it has a tangible effect on offline incidents against Jewish people as people act on this encouragement. When offline examples of antisemitism are captured and virally circulated across social media, it heightens feelings of fear and panic among the Jewish community. In turn, CST receives a larger quantity of reports from a public more motivated to make them.
- These totals are only indicative, as the actual amount of antisemitic content that is generated and disseminated on online platforms is much larger. **In some cases, social media has been used as a tool for coordinated campaigns of antisemitic harassment, threats and abuse directed at Jewish public figures and other individuals.** Where this is the case, CST will record a coordinated campaign as a single incident, even if it involves multiple tweets, posts,

messages or comments. CST does not trawl the internet looking for online incidents to log and will only record online incidents that are reported to CST by a member of the public, and where either the offender or the victim is based in the UK.

- Just as recorded antisemitic incidents climbed when restrictions were lifted, they diminished when the tightest lockdown measures were implemented. This is consistent with a trend observed in 2020, when the peaks and troughs of recorded antisemitism corresponded with the severity of governmental restrictions on public or collective activity. **In January, just 89 antisemitic incidents were reported to CST, the lowest monthly total recorded since December 2017 (86 incidents) and only the second month since then in which CST recorded fewer than 100 antisemitic incidents,** with December 2020 (90 incidents) the other. In January, the UK was under national lockdown and the country reached a high point in confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths.<sup>5</sup>
- The pandemic, and its impact on communal interaction, has compelled those who wish to spread anti-Jewish hate to find innovative ways of doing so. In the first half of 2021, CST received 13 reports of video conferencing events being hijacked with antisemitic material. These 'Zoombombings' were unheard of prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, but quickly became a method by which antisemites could take advantage of the new social reality; there were ten such incidents between January and June 2020.
- COVID-19 has not only provided perpetrators with a new medium through which they can communicate their hatred of Jews; it has continued to prove a fertile topic for strands of antisemitic discourse. **During the first six months of 2021, CST recorded 41 incidents containing antisemitic**

**rhetoric alongside reference to the pandemic, rising from the 26 such cases reported over the same period in 2020.** These range from conspiracy

theories about Jewish involvement in creating and spreading COVID-19 or creating and spreading the myth of COVID-19 for various malevolent and financial purposes, to simply wishing and hoping that Jewish people catch the virus and die from it, to offensively misappropriating Holocaust-era imagery.<sup>6</sup> The speed with which these discourses initially emerged – and their persistence throughout different stages of the pandemic – is a legacy of the pandemic, once again illuminating the adaptability of modern-day antisemitism and its offenders.

- **CST recorded 87 incidents in the category of Assault in the first six months of 2021, an increase of 67% from the 52 incidents of this type reported in the first half of 2020, and the most ever recorded in the first half of a year.** At 7%, assaults form a lower proportion of the incident total than was typical pre-pandemic. For comparison, from January to June 2019, 85 (9%) of the 911 antisemitic incidents recorded were attacks on Jewish people. It is not surprising that reports of incidents in this category are not as substantial a part of the whole as they were, given the impact of COVID-19 on physical public interaction. In addition to these 87 incidents, two attacks were serious enough to be classed as Extreme Violence, compared to one in the first six months of 2020. This is indicative of the increased levels of aggression that have marked several assaults, perhaps reflective of a release of pent-up frustrations built over the course of lockdown, as well as the intensity of anger directed towards Jews by people who hold them responsible for Israel's alleged actions.

<sup>5</sup> [World Health Organisation](#)

<sup>6</sup> An in-depth examination of coronavirus and anti-semitic discourse can be found in CST's publication, [Coronavirus and the Plague of Antisemitism](#)

- Incidents of Damage & Desecration to Jewish property rose by 70%, from 33 incidents in the first half of 2020 to 56 between January and June 2021.** Twenty-eight of these incidents involved damage done to the homes and vehicles of Jewish people, 12 to Jewish businesses and organisations, five to synagogues, two to Jewish schools, and two to Jewish cemeteries.
- There were 85 incidents reported to CST in the category of Threats from January to June 2021,** which includes direct antisemitic threats and incitement to violence against people, institutions or property, rather than more general abuse containing non-specific threatening language. This marks a rise of 89% from the 45 incidents of this type reported in the first half of 2020.
- CST recorded 1,073 incidents in the category of Abusive Behaviour from January to June 2021, an increase of 45%** from the 739 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded across the same period in 2020. Eighty-two per cent of all incidents in the first six months of 2021 were in this category.
- There were five incidents reported to CST in the category of mass-produced antisemitic Literature** in the first six months of 2021, no change from the five such incidents recorded between January and June 2020. This is the only category in which CST has not documented a record half-year total in 2021.
- Seven hundred and forty-eight antisemitic incidents were reported to have taken place in Greater London, rising by 51%** from 2020's total of 496 incidents across the same time period. CST recorded 181 antisemitic incidents in Greater Manchester between January and June 2021, an increase of 159% from the 70 incidents in the corresponding area and timeframe last year. The combined proportional contribution

of these communal hubs to the UK's six-monthly total has also risen, from 65% in 2020 to 71% in 2021. The numeric and proportional increases observed in these regions are largely based in the fact that a significant amount of the antisemitic reactions to the escalation of violence in the Middle East were directed in person at the largest Jewish populations in the UK and the people who form them.

- While it is expected that the majority of incidents take place in areas where Jewish life is most established, antisemitic incidents were reported to CST in all but four police regions across the UK in the first half of 2021 (Cleveland, Derbyshire, Dorset and Suffolk). This is a broad spread, explained by several factors. Online incidents, which do not necessitate physical proximity to Jewish populations, remain considerable in number, and so does the potential for reported antisemitism to emanate from a more varied geographical profile. **As online incidents have increased, so has CST's social media footprint, and with it the accessibility and capacity for the public to report antisemitism.** Likewise, the ever-developing relationship and trust between CST and the police has played an



Graffiti stuck to a lamp post in London, June

important role in painting a more accurate landscape of antisemitism in the UK, and CST benefits greatly from data-sharing agreements with more police services across the UK than ever before.

- After Greater London and Greater Manchester, the police regions with the highest number of recorded antisemitic incidents from January to June 2021 are Northumbria (45 incidents, compared to 40 in the first half of 2020), West Yorkshire (41 incidents, compared to 36 in the same timeframe in 2020), Hertfordshire (37 incidents, compared to 12 from January to June 2020), Merseyside (26 incidents, up from 19 in the first six months of 2020) and Scotland (22 incidents, compared to 21 between January and June 2020).
- **CST received a description of the ethnic appearance of the offender or offenders in 455 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents** recorded over the first six months of 2021. Of these, 151 (33%) were described as white – North European; 19 (4%) as white – South European; 48 (11%) as black; 75 (16%) as South Asian; four (1%) as Southeast Asian; finally, 158 (35%) were described as Arab or North African. There is a key difference here in the offenders described to CST between January and June 2021, compared to periods when there is no escalation in conflict involving Israel: a far higher proportion of offenders are of North African, Arab or South Asian origin. It is a contrast from the first half of 2020, for example, when 67% of antisemitic incident offenders were described to CST as white – North European; 2% as white – South European; 16% as black; 5% as South Asian; less than 1% as Southeast Asian; and 10% as Arab or North African. A similar change in the relative proportions of described incident offenders was seen during the previous conflict in Israel and Gaza, in July and August 2014, although this is the first time that more offenders are reported to be of Arab or North

African descent than any other ethnicity.<sup>7</sup> It is important to bear in mind that these details rely on the subjective and fleeting judgement of witnesses and victims.

- A description of the gender of the offender or offenders was obtained by CST in 706 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2021. Of these, the offender was described as male in 583 incidents (83% of incidents where the offender's gender was obtained), female in 109 incidents (15%), and mixed groups of males and females in 14 incidents (2%).
- In 674 of the 1,308 reports of antisemitism between January and June 2021, the approximate age of the offender or offenders was provided. Among these, 536 (80%) involved adult offenders; in 135 cases (20%) the perpetrators were minors; there were only three instances (less than 1%) where the offenders were a mix of adults and minors. Once again, using the first six months of 2020 as a barometer for a typical age distribution of offenders during periods without trigger events in the Middle East, there is a less uneven spread between adult and minor perpetrators. Over the same timeframe last year, 91% of antisemitic offenders were adults and 9% were minors. This point reflects the rise in antisemitic incidents in UK schools during the recent conflict.
- In addition to the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2021, a further 396 potential incidents were reported to CST that are not included in this report's statistics as, upon investigation, they did not evidence antisemitic motivation, language or targeting. Many of these potential incidents involve suspicious activity or possible hostile reconnaissance at Jewish locations, and they play an important role in CST's provision of protection to the Jewish community.

<sup>7</sup> [Antisemitic Incidents Report 2014](#), CST, 2015

## ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT NUMBERS

CST recorded 1,308 antisemitic incidents across the UK in the first six months of 2021, the highest ever total that CST has recorded in the January to June period of any year.

This total constitutes a rise of 49% from the 875 antisemitic incidents reported in the first half of 2020, which is now the third-highest total ever recorded by CST between January and June. It continues a cycle of historically high incident figures recorded by CST over the past six years. CST received 911 reports of antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2019, 810 from January to June 2018, and 786 in the first six months of 2017. CST has been recording antisemitic incidents since 1984.

In addition to the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2021, a further 396 potential incidents were reported to CST that are not included in this report's statistics as, upon investigation, they did not evidence antisemitic motivation, language or targeting. These reports, forming 23% of the 1,704 potential incidents recorded by CST, involved suspicious activity or possible hostile reconnaissance at Jewish locations, non-antisemitic crime affecting Jewish people or property, or anti-Israel activity that did not meet CST's threshold for classifying as antisemitic. Although not included in this report's figures, they are important in CST's provision of protection to the Jewish community. Most required further investigation or a security-related response, whether or not they were deemed antisemitic in nature.

The spike in anti-Jewish hate reported during and after the intensification in violence in the Middle East is a driving factor behind the record total of antisemitic incidents reported from January to June 2021. In May, the month when conflict escalated in Israel and Gaza, CST recorded 639 cases of anti-Jewish hate, the highest monthly total ever recorded. It eclipses

the combined second- and third-highest monthly totals, when 317 and 229 incidents were reported in July and August 2014 respectively: the last time that Israel-related hostilities reached a similar intensity.

The 639 antisemitic incidents recorded in May account for 49% of the half-year total and would, on its own, be a record six-monthly figure in every year prior to 2017. The overall 1,308 tally would constitute a record annual total in every year prior to 2016, and perpetuates the pattern of historically high antisemitic incident totals reported since 2016. More than 100 instances of antisemitic hate were recorded in five of the six months covered in this report, whereas monthly totals exceeding 100 incidents were only recorded on six occasions from January 2006 to March 2016, five of which were also the consequence of reactions to war in the Middle East.

While circumstances in Israel and Palestine had a significant influence on the surge of antisemitism observed in May, it also occurred within the context of lockdown measures easing. This was the month when the UK began Step 3 of its response to the pandemic, most businesses were

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allowed to open and restrictions on collective social activities were loosened. The strong emotional reactions that war between Israel and Hamas stimulates, coupled with greater opportunity to release lockdown-induced frustrations, may have exacerbated the volume and severity of antisemitic incidents reported during this period.

Just as incident figures rose in correlation with the relaxing of governmental constraints on public activity, they were at their lowest when the strictest rules were implemented and applied. The 89 antisemitic incidents recorded in January is the lowest monthly total reported to CST since December 2017 (86 incidents) and only the second time since then that under 100 incidents were recorded in a single month, with the other being December 2020 – a month of similarly tight restrictions on in-person encounters – when 90 incidents were recorded. Since the pandemic began to alter daily life in the UK, January 2021 is the month with the peak number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths.

The pandemic's repercussions for antisemitism go even further than shaping the peaks and troughs of incident totals throughout the year. COVID-19 has deeply impacted communal interactions, challenging a huge number of people and organisations to rethink their methods of operating and communicating in order to adapt to a new and exceptional set of circumstances. This opportunity and necessity for innovation has been equally applicable to those who wish to express their anti-Jewish prejudice. In the first half of 2021, CST received 13 reports of video conferencing events that were hijacked with antisemitic content, an increase from the ten such incidents recorded from January to June 2020. These 'Zoombombings' were unheard of prior to the pandemic outbreak, but soon emerged as a modus operandi for antisemites to spread their hatred, seizing on the immediate universal reliance on these video platforms for social participation. It demonstrates the ability, speed and expediency of antisemitic

offenders to adjust to and exploit shifts, however considerable, in the social landscape.

These 13 Zoombombings are counted among the 355 antisemitic incidents reported to have taken place online in the first six months of 2021, a decrease of 2% from the 364 such incidents recorded in the first half of 2020 and the second-highest six-monthly total of online incidents that CST has ever recorded. They comprise 27% of this year's total so far, compared to 42% of 2020's six-monthly figure. In the first half of 2019, 332 online incidents were reported (36% of the total), 221 over the same period in 2018 (28%), and 81 in the first half of 2017 (10%). These incidents are predominantly made up of Abusive Behaviour (in 327 cases), but also include 27 Threats and one instance of Damage & Desecration (the hacking of a Jewish charity's social media account). Of these 355 online incidents, 125 occurred on Twitter, 79 through text or instant messaging services, 35 on Facebook, 27 via email, 13 on video conferencing platforms, eight were abusive comments on online articles, three took place on YouTube, and 65 on a range of other social media. They provide antisemites with the space to express political, ideological and extremist ideas, both simple and nuanced, as well as the security of distance and anonymity. Abuse can be preserved in these spaces, spread globally in an instant, and reach its target easily, often without meaningful consequence for the perpetrator.

While the number of reported online incidents has remained relatively steady, it is perhaps surprising that it has not increased at the rate of offline incidents. Much of the conversation regarding events in Israel and Palestine was held on social media platforms, while the boredom and disillusionment potentially engendered by lockdown would appear ripe conditions for a sharp upswing in reports of online antisemitism. However, online discourse and the way that information – and misinformation – is spread on these virtual forums tangibly influenced the volume of offline incidents recorded by CST. When there is online incitement to extreme levels of anger and hatred over Israel, offline

incidents against Jewish people escalate. When offline examples of antisemitism are filmed and shared virally across the Internet, concern about antisemitism among the Jewish community is enhanced, and CST receives a larger quantity of reports of antisemitic incidents that may otherwise have gone unreported.

CST records each specific targeted campaign as a single incident, because to record each piece of antisemitic content as a separate incident would be unsustainable and cause extreme variations in CST's incident totals, obstructing clear analysis of offline incidents. It is also worth bearing in mind that the number of online incidents in this report reflects the number of reports received by CST from victims, witnesses or other third parties, and does not include the vast amount of antisemitic material sifted by CST's researchers as part of its wider work protecting the Jewish community from potential attack. Given the vast array of material posted and the variety of platforms across which it is circulated, an accurate figure for the actual amount of antisemitic content on social media would be impossible to quantify. Instead, this total highlights that online forums continue to be a fertile ground for public expressions of antisemitism, sometimes culminating in coordinated campaigns against Jewish public figures and institutions.

It is difficult to gauge whether the pattern of historically high antisemitic incident figures observed by CST since 2016 is due to more incidents taking place in the UK, or a society that feels more comfortable to report. The answer is likely to be a combination of both. Sometimes, as in May 2021, it is clear that there has been a genuine increase in incidents that is linked to a specific set of circumstances. Despite improvements in reporting, it is expected that antisemitic hate crime and incidents are underreported, especially where the victims are minors or the incident is considered of 'lesser' impact by the victim. The statistics contained in this report should therefore be seen as indicative of general trends, rather than absolute measures

of the number of incidents that took place. Answering why antisemitic incidents take place is not simple. Victim or witness evidence for what may have been a brief, traumatic experience can be vague and disjointed. Many incidents do not have a specific victim and the offender is often unknown, but it is still possible to analyse the data contained in the individual reports received by CST, and the picture they show is complex. In short, there is no single profile of an antisemitic incident victim or offender, nor is there a single explanation as to why antisemitism persists in modern society.

### Antisemitic or anti-Israel?

CST is often asked about the difference between antisemitic incidents and anti-Israel activity, and how this distinction is made in the categorisation of incidents. The distinction between the two can be subtle and the subject of much debate. Clearly, it would not be acceptable to define all anti-Israel activity as antisemitic. Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that contemporary antisemitism can occur in the context of, or be accompanied by, extreme feelings over the Israel/ Palestine conflict, and that hostility towards Israel may be expressed via, or motivated by, antisemitic rhetoric and conspiracy theories. Discourse relating to the conflict is used by antisemitic incident offenders to abuse Jews, and anti-Israel discourse can sometimes repeat, or echo, antisemitic language and imagery. For example, the terms "Zionist" and "Zionism" will often be used in arguments about Israel and the Middle East; sometimes they are used accurately and legitimately, and at other times they are deployed in an antisemitic way. CST must distinguish between the occasions when these terms are used in a purely political sense, and the times when they are abused as euphemisms for "Jewishness" and "Jews". Similarly, the phrase "Zionist Lobby", when it is reserved for Jewish organisations and individuals regardless of whether they have taken a public stance on Zionism, walks the line between the conspiracy theory that Jews have a disproportionate political power and influence, and the antisemitic trope that Jews are not

to be trusted. Drawing out these distinctions, and deciding on where the dividing lines lie, is one of the most difficult areas of CST's work in recording and analysing hate crime.

Sometimes the targeting of a particular incident can suggest an intention to intimidate or harass Jews on the part of the offender. For example, if anti-Israel posters or graffiti appear to have been deliberately placed close to a synagogue or other Jewish building, or in an area with a large Jewish population, then they are more likely to be classified as an antisemitic incident. If anti-Israel material is sent unsolicited to a synagogue or other clearly Jewish venue at random then it may well be recorded as an antisemitic incident (because the synagogue was targeted on the basis of it being Jewish and the offender has failed to distinguish between a place of worship and pro-Israel political activity). Similarly, if shouts of "Free Palestine", comments and questions demanding an opinion on the Middle East, or Palestinian flags and imagery are directed at Jewish people and community – simply because they are perceived to be Jewish – it will also be considered an antisemitic incident.

If, however, anti-Israel material (containing no antisemitic language) is sent unsolicited to specifically pro-Israel organisations, then this incident would not be classified as antisemitic. Similarly, if a Jewish individual or group is engaging in public pro-Israel advocacy and subsequently receives anti-Israel material, this would most likely not be classified as antisemitic (unless, again, it contains antisemitic language).

The political discourse used in an incident may also be the reason why the incident is accepted or rejected as antisemitic. In particular, incidents that equate Israel to Nazi Germany would normally be recorded as antisemitic because the comparison is so deeply hurtful and abusive, using Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state as the basis for the insult. However, incidents that compare Israel to, for example, apartheid South Africa, would not normally be recorded as antisemitic incidents. While the charge that

Israel practises apartheid upsets many Jews, it does not contain the same visceral capacity to offend Jews as the comparison with Nazism, which carries particular meaning for Jews because of the Holocaust; nor does it play on Israel's Jewishness as a way of causing hurt.

CST recorded 693 antisemitic incidents that made allusions or were related to Israel and the Middle East, evidenced anti-Zionist motivation, or both in the first half of 2021. Of these, 43 included a comparison between Israel and the Nazis, while the terms "Zionism" or "Zionist" were employed in 68. Irrespective of whether or not anti-Israel incidents are classified as antisemitic by CST, they are still relevant to CST's security work as they may involve threats and abuse directed at Jewish people or organisations who work with – or in support of – Israel, and therefore have an impact on the security of the UK Jewish community.



## INCIDENT CATEGORIES<sup>8</sup>

### Extreme Violence

CST recorded two antisemitic incidents of Extreme Violence in the first six months of 2021, compared to one such incident in the first half of 2020, and none between January and June 2019, 2018 or 2017. In one case a vehicle was used as a weapon, and in the other, the victim was hit on the head.

### Assault

CST recorded 87 incidents in the category of Assault in the first half of 2021, a 67% increase from the 52 assaults reported in the corresponding period in 2020. This is the highest number of assaults that CST has ever recorded in between January and June of any year. There were 85 assaults reported to CST in the first six months of 2019, 62 between January and June 2018 and 80 in the first half of 2017. Of the recorded assaults, 18 involved stones, eggs, bricks, bottles or other objects thrown, on ten occasions from a passing vehicle; 15 involved punching or kicking of the victim; in 13 cases, the victim was spat at; on nine occasions, the victim was pushed or pulled; in six instances, a vehicle was used to physically endanger pedestrians; four assaults involved the offender stripping the victim of religious clothes or accessories. Forty-seven of these attacks were accompanied by verbal abuse, and seven contained an element of threatening language.

The 87 assaults on Jewish people form 7% of the antisemitic incidents total, a lower proportion than was typical before the COVID-19 outbreak. For comparison, the 85 antisemitic assaults reported in the first six months of 2019 comprised 9% of the 2019 half-year figure. Allowing for Extreme Violence as its extension, Assault is the only incident type that requires face-to-face contact, and so their diminished proportion of the whole total is to be expected

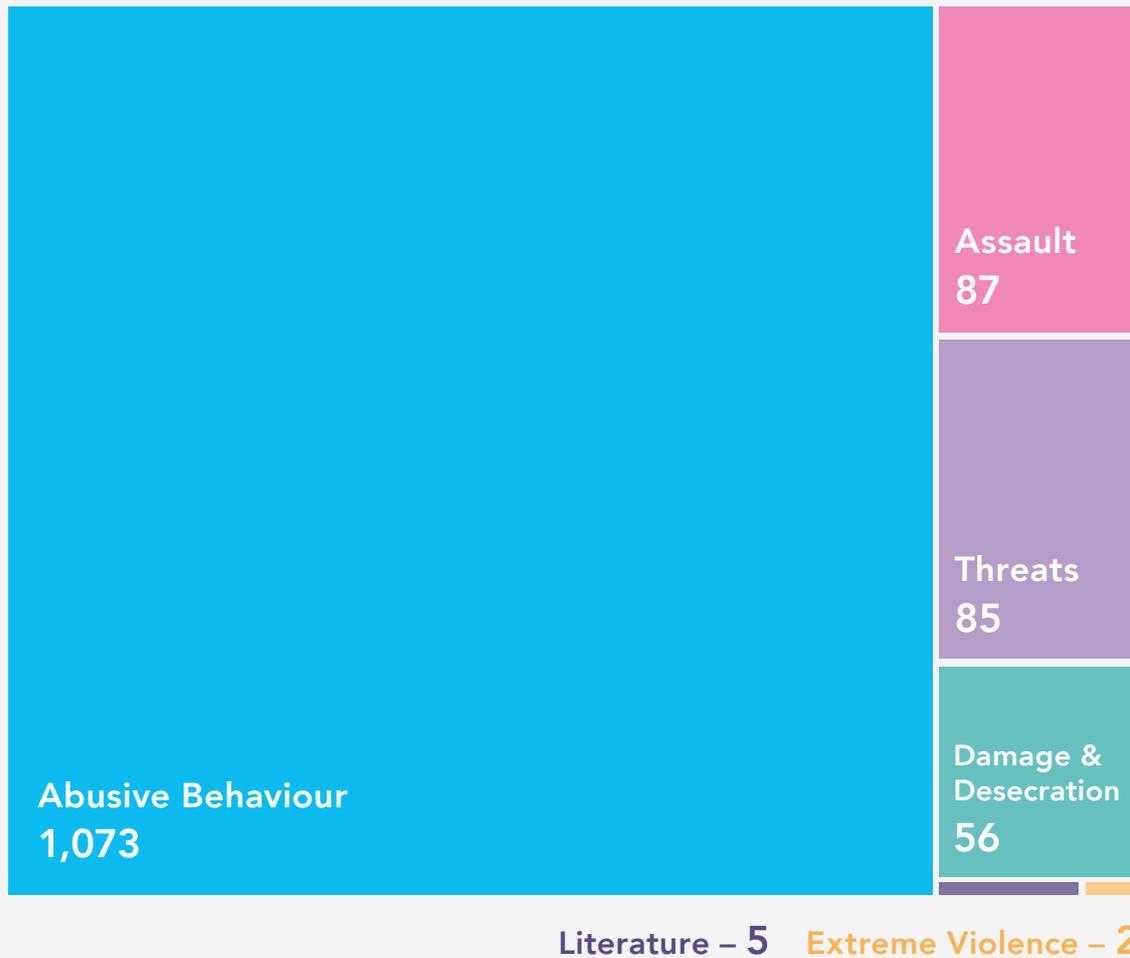
over a period when various degrees of lockdown rules have been implemented. This is mirrored in the months when social distancing measures were most strictly communicated and applied. In January, February and March, only four, seven and six anti-Jewish violent incidents were respectively reported, rising to nine in April, 42 in May and 19 in June. Although the escalation in violence in the Middle East substantially affected the spike observed over the latter two months, Assault figures still show how pandemic regulations impact the ways in which people are willing or able to express their antisemitism, lessening the likelihood of close physical contact with a stranger when most strongly enforced. Similarly, the reduced public presence of potential victims may also have limited the opportunities for perpetrators to attack Jews.

In the antisemitic assaults that have been recorded, a worrying theme noted in 2020's analysis has persisted from January to June 2021. While every unprovoked physical attack is nasty and aggressive, several of those reported featured a high level of severity, in intention, outcome or both. This is in part exemplified by the occurrences of Extreme Violence, as well as the six other occasions on which vehicles were used to cause harm (or to attempt to do so).

It is difficult to know exactly why the intensity of assaults remains high, let alone understand the psyche of someone who chooses to manifest their hatred so viciously. It is possible that this gear change speaks to a release of frustrations that have built over several lockdowns and periods of relative isolation. For antisemites who found the confines of the pandemic's reality a claustrophobic, irritating experience – coupled with the anger felt towards Jews by people who hold them accountable for Israel's alleged actions – even the slightest easing of restrictions allowed these stifled emotions to materialise in an especially hostile way.

<sup>8</sup> A full explanation of CST's antisemitic incident categories can be found in the leaflet [Categories of Antisemitic Incidents](#)

## ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT CATEGORIES



Regions with established, sizeable Jewish communities are more likely to be targeted with physical violence. Forty-three (49%) of the 87 antisemitic incidents classed as Assault reported in the first half of 2021 took place across just four boroughs: Barnet (16) and Hackney (nine) in Greater London, and Salford (14) and Bury (four) in Greater Manchester. These areas are where some of the largest Jewish populations in the UK reside, and some of the most visibly Jewish communities. Indeed, in at least 31 (36%) of these 87 incidents, the victims are understood to be visibly Jewish, usually on account of religious insignia, Jewish school uniforms or traditional clothing.

It could be that the obvious indicators of difference that Jewish visibility projects are interpreted by the offender as a threat to what they perceive to be their own culture or

territory, or as something so distinct to their own lived experience that it becomes easier to dehumanise and degrade. It may also provide them with a certainty of who and what they are attacking, as well as the opportunity for maximum public humiliation in targeting or stripping their victim's markers of identity.

### CASE STUDY

In May, a group of boys in Jewish school uniform were in North London waiting for the bus home when three teenagers accosted them, shouting, "Free Palestine" alongside insults about Jews. The victims walked away but were pursued by the offenders, who then followed them onto a bus and resumed the abuse. As one of the boys was trying to go downstairs, he was shoved. The bus driver, after being threatened himself, told everyone to get off the bus a few stops later.

## Damage & Desecration to Jewish Property

There were 56 instances of Damage & Desecration to Jewish Property recorded by CST in the first half of 2021, a rise of 70% from the 33 incidents of this kind reported in the corresponding timeframe last year. To compare, there were 39 incidents recorded in this category over the first six months of 2019, 44 between January and June 2018 and 54 in the first half of 2017. Twenty-eight of these incidents saw damage done to the homes and vehicles of Jewish people, 12 to Jewish businesses and organisations, five to synagogue buildings, two involved the desecration of Jewish schools and two of Jewish cemeteries. One incident, classed as an online form of Damage & Desecration, involved the social media account of a Jewish charity being hacked to display Palestinian flags.

### CASE STUDY

A messianic synagogue in Norfolk was desecrated with antisemitic graffiti in May. The graffiti said, "Kike Free Palestine" with a swastika drawn underneath. "Kike" is an offensive, racist slur for Jews.



In 21 of the 56 instances of Damage & Desecration, the offender used graffiti, daubing or stickers of an antisemitic nature to deface the Jewish target (of which nine depicted swastikas or made reference to the Holocaust), while eggs, stones, bricks, bottles or other projectiles were thrown to cause damage on 12 occasions. CST recorded seven cases involving the destruction or theft of a mezuzah (a Jewish prayer scroll affixed to a building's entrance), four in which windows were broken, three involving the punching or kicking of Jewish property, and two where non-kosher foodstuffs were left at or on Jewish property. All included some element of anti-Jewish focus, language or imagery in order to be recorded as antisemitic by CST.

### Threats

CST recorded 85 direct antisemitic Threats between January and June 2021, more than in the first half of any previous year, rising by 89% from the 45 incidents of this sort reported in the first half of 2020. Fifty incidents were recorded in this category in the first six months of 2019, 56 from January to June 2018 and 58 in the opening half of 2017.

### CASE STUDY

In June, a London-based Jewish shop owner was threatened by a man claiming to be a customer. The offender, who was denied a refund, started shouting antisemitic slurs at the victim, calling him "a stinking bloody Jew" and a "Palestinian agitator". The words "I will kill you" were also directed at the victim. After the security alarm was pressed, the perpetrator left but returned a few days after and continued with his antisemitic diatribe, adding, "I don't care, call the police, I've been to prison three times before." Upon returning a third time and physically intimidating the victim, the police were called and have identified the culprit.

Twenty-four of the 85 Threats took place in public spaces while eight were made to or by people associated with universities; five were aimed at Jewish businesses or organisations; four at the homes of Jewish individuals; four at synagogues (and an additional two at congregants on their way to or from services); three were school-related and two were directed at public figures. Twenty-seven of the incidents in this category were written on online platforms, nine were delivered via phone call or message and one via mail, while there were four bomb threats made.

### Abusive Behaviour

There were 1,073 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the category of Abusive Behaviour in the first half of 2021, signalling a rise of 45% from the 739 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded between January and June 2020, and comprising 82% of this year's overall incident total of 1,308. There were 727 counts of Abusive Behaviour in the first half of 2019, 616 from January to June 2018 and 582 in the same period in 2017. The umbrella of Abusive Behaviour covers a wide range of incident types, including everything encompassed by written and verbal antisemitic abuse, the latter of which can be face-to-face or via telephone calls and voicemail messages. This category also consists of antisemitic emails, text messages, social media posts and comments, as well as hate mail that is not mass-produced and antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property.

In 242 of the Abusive Behaviour incidents reported, the victims were random Jewish people in public, and visibly Jewish in at least 115 of these. Jewish organisations or businesses were the target of 67 incidents in this category, while public figures – Jewish and non-Jewish – were subjected to antisemitic abuse on 41 reported occasions. One hundred and nine of these cases were related to the school sector, and 75 to the university sector.

Among the 1,073 incidents in this category, 434 involved spoken verbal abuse and 193 written abuse, while 66 contained threatening language without making a direct threat to the victim. There were 176 instances of antisemitic graffiti, daubing or stickers on non-Jewish property, many of which included the depiction of swastikas. One hundred and twenty-two involved offensive shouts or gestures in public, of which 105 were made from passing vehicles. This is much higher than the comparable figures in the first half of 2020, when 43 incidents involved offensive shouts or gestures in public, of which 23 came from vehicles. This indicates the extent to which driving through Jewish neighbourhoods in cars, often flying Palestinian flags, and abusing Jews in public about the conflict in Israel, became a popular way of expressing antisemitic hatred in the context of escalated violence in the Middle East. Forty-three abusive phone calls or voice messages were made, and there were 19 examples of physical hate mail sent to personal or professional addresses.

### CASE STUDY

A visibly Jewish teacher at a non-Jewish school in East London was the victim of 12 separate incidents across May and June. On 11 occasions, pupils at the school approached him and shouted "Free Palestine" at him, while in the twelfth case these words were written on his whiteboard. This is reflective of the kind of incidents reported in school environments, where teachers and students who are known to be Jewish have been harassed with abuse about Israel simply because of their Jewish identity.

Of the 1,073 instances of Abusive Behaviour, 327 occurred online, comprising 30% of the category's total. These form the majority of the 355 online incidents reported which, although they did not increase at the rate of offline incidents, constitute the second-highest total for online incidents recorded in the first half of a year. Social media and instant messaging services remain places where hatred can be expressed, affirmed by likeminded antisemites, and shared on a global scale, indiscriminately or targeting specific individuals. These 327 incidents show the vital role that virtual forums continue to play as a conduit for abuse by offenders who are able to hide under a cloak of anonymity, without the fear of meaningful reproach. There is also an unquantifiable aspect to this abuse. As observed during and after the intensification of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, the proliferation of information and misinformation about the conflict online – and the incitement to extreme rage over the subject matter witnessed on these platforms – have a direct effect on offline incidents targeting Jewish people, when people are inspired to act on these feelings. When online anger towards Jews over Israel mounts, it has real-world consequences for the Jewish community.

### Literature

There has been no change in the number of incidents in the category of mass-produced antisemitic Literature, with five such incidents reported to CST in the first half of 2021, equal to the figure from January to June 2020. CST recorded ten instances of Literature distribution in the first six months of 2019, 32 in the first half of 2018 and 12 in the corresponding period of 2017.

The abnormally high number of incidents in this category recorded between January and June 2018 was in large part due to the circulation of an antisemitic, conspiracy-laden leaflet called *Tip of the Iceberg* around homes in North London and Hertfordshire. Reports of that leaflet have dwindled since, but are responsible for two of the five Literature incidents recorded so far this year. The remaining three cases involve the

dissemination of two other leaflets, and of an antisemitic conspiracy theory referenced in a home-schooling kit that was sent out to multiple families. Literature is the only category in which CST has not documented a record half-year total in 2021.

### CASE STUDY

The idea of Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus Christ was present in a home-schooling kit sent out to multiple families. It is a foundational antisemitic slur that also plays into other tropes and conspiracy theories about Jewish people, such as blood libel (which falsely accuses Jews of murdering Christian children in order to use their blood in the performance of religious rituals). The publisher responded that the material had not been reviewed for 20 years, and they would revise its content.



Questioned by Pontius Pilate

#### The Trial of Jesus

The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to be guilty. They found it difficult to find anything that he had done wrong, even though they paid people to lie about him. Eventually they asked him if he was the Son of God. Jesus replied 'I am.' This was enough. They said this was an insult to God. Jesus was taken before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.

## INCIDENT VICTIMS

The victims of antisemitic incidents come from the whole spectrum of the Jewish community: from strictly orthodox to liberal, reform and secular Jews; from the largest Jewish communities of London and Manchester to small, isolated communities all over the UK; and from Jewish schoolchildren to Members of Parliament. Occasionally, antisemitism will also be directed at people who do not identify as Jewish.

There were 330 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the first six months of 2021 in which the victims were ordinary Jewish individuals in public. In at least 161 of these, they were visibly Jewish on account of their religious or traditional clothing, Jewish school uniforms, or jewellery and insignia bearing religious symbols. Of the 1,308 incidents recorded by CST from January to June 2021, there was an element of spoken verbal abuse in 520; 150 involved threatening language; abuse of an antisemitic nature was shouted or gestured in public on 140 occasions, 117 of which came from the occupant of a vehicle. All of this is broadly indicative of the most common single type of offline antisemitic incident reported to CST: the random, unprovoked, verbal abuse of strangers who are presumed for whatever reason to be Jewish, as they go about their daily lives in public spaces that often have a large footfall of Jewish people. This was especially true of incidents motivated by anger towards Israel during and after the escalation of violence in the Middle East when, if there was a single recurrent incident reported to CST, it involved Jewish people in public spaces being targeted with shouts of *"Free Palestine"*, often from a moving vehicle.

In the first six months of 2021, there were 21 antisemitic incidents recorded at Jewish schools, compared to four in the first half of 2021. A further 29 incidents involved Jewish schoolchildren off the school premises, often on their way to or from home, compared to 12 incidents of this type reported across the same

period last year. CST recorded 80 incidents wherein the victims were schoolchildren or staff at non-faith schools, rising substantially from the six reported from January to June 2020. This constitutes a total of 130 incidents affecting people and buildings in the school sector, more than have ever been reported in the first half of year, comprising a sizable increase of 491% from the 22 such incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020. Ninety-two of these took place in May, 60 of which occurred at non-faith schools.

It is unusual for such a high proportion (62%) of school-related incidents to take place at non-faith schools. From January to June 2020, this figure was 27%, and 19% in the corresponding timeframe in 2019. CST supported many schoolchildren and teachers who felt isolated and fearful of returning to their place of education and work. It shows the impact of a trigger event in the Middle East, with Jewish people facing extreme backlash for Israel's alleged actions in places where they are a small minority. This, in some ways, is a microcosm of the Jewish community's experience in the UK throughout and since the period of intensified conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Of the 130 antisemitic incidents affecting schools, pupils and staff, 15 came under the category of Assault (seven at non-Jewish schools, seven away from school premises and one on Jewish school grounds); two incidents were classified as Damage & Desecration to Jewish property; there were three direct Threats made, one of which was to a Jewish school; 109 incidents were classed as Abusive Behaviour; and there was one case of mass-mailed antisemitic Literature.

A high number of antisemitic incidents were also reported in the sphere of higher education. In the first half of 2021, 84 incidents affected Jewish students, academics, student unions or other student bodies, rising by 200% from the 28 incidents of this kind recorded from January

to June 2020. Sixteen of these events took place on campus or university property, and 68 off campus. Among them, there was one instance of Assault, eight Threats, and 75 examples of Abusive Behaviour. Fifty-seven of the 84 antisemitic incidents in higher education took place in May.

The fact that recorded antisemitic incidents increased to such an extent in schools and universities may give an insight into how the conflict in the Middle East is consumed and discussed in the UK. As evidenced by the reports in these educational facilities, it is clearly a topic that inspires engagement among children and young adults. The proliferation of information and misinformation regarding events in Israel and Palestine on social media makes it prevalent in public discourse, particularly among a demographic more likely to spend time on these platforms. This translates into offline debate and action, especially when the online rhetoric is inciteful. There are many aspects to the dynamics of school and campus settings that could explain why a subject matter like this becomes a channel for abuse in those spaces, but one is the sense of belonging that feeling part of a social movement can provide. To fulfil this need, which is perhaps more keenly felt among groups of young people, they line up behind a cause whose complexity they do not fully understand, without necessarily appreciating or caring about how their words and actions can become antisemitic hate in certain scenarios. This is not to excuse the offenders or absolve them of responsibility: it merely offers a possible reason for why the war between Israel and Hamas sparked a wave of antisemitic interactions in these kinds of environments.

CST recorded 88 incidents that took place at people's residential property in the first half of 2021. The rise of 28% from the 69 incidents of this kind in the first six months of 2020, which itself was an increase of 38% from the 50 reported over the same period in 2019, is in part instructive of the upswing in neighbour and housemate disputes over the course of lockdown. With people across the country

forced to spend even more time at home than at the pandemic's outset between January and June 2020, outlets for frustrations limited and feelings of isolation potentially heightened, it is possible that local tensions were enhanced and more likely to spill over into speech and acts of a hateful nature directed at those in closest proximity. This, combined with the number of incidents recorded between school- and university-based incidents – many of which involved a victim known to be Jewish by the offender – contributes to a record half-year total of interpersonal incidents, wherein the victim and offender have some kind of prior relationship to each other. One hundred and thirty (10%) of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents reported to CST from January to June 2021 were classed as such, compared to 39 (4%) of the 875 incidents recorded across the corresponding period last year.

There were 34 antisemitic incidents recorded during the first six months of 2021 that targeted synagogues (including buildings, congregants and staff while at the location), exceeding the 15 incidents of this type in the first half of 2020 by 127%. A further 14 incidents saw congregants or staff targeted on their way to or from prayer services, rising 180% from the five such incidents reported to CST from January to June last year. This comprises a net 140% increase in cases of antisemitism affecting synagogues and the people travelling to, from, or already inside them, from 20 in the opening half of 2020, to the 48 incidents of this kind recorded so far this year. A couple of factors explain this. Unlike in 2020, when they were instructed to close between March and July due to the pandemic, places of worship have been allowed to remain open at various capacities throughout the first half of 2021. Additionally, synagogues represented an easy, visible and symbolic target for people looking to direct their extreme levels of anger over Israel towards Jewish communities. Twenty-four of these 48 incidents happened in May.

Nine antisemitic incidents were related to the workplace, equal to the nine incidents of this nature reported in the first six months of 2020,

while there were 85 incidents that targeted Jewish organisations and businesses, dropping by 18% from the 104 such incidents recorded between January and June 2020. Meanwhile, antisemitic incidents in which the victim was a pre-eminent individual or public figure fell by 11%, from 54 instances in the first half of 2020 to 48 in the first six months of 2021. While these totals remain significant, they are diminished in part because the issue of alleged antisemitism within the Labour Party has not been as prominent in news and media as it was in previous years. When it was, Jewish Members of Parliament, as well as institutions speaking out in solidarity against the abuse they were facing, were often targeted with the very hatred they were using – and continue to use – their platform to address.

CST received a description of the victim or victims' gender in 784 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2021. Of these, 447 (57%) were male; 279 (36%) were female; in 58 incidents (7%), the victims were mixed groups of males and females.

The victim or victims' age was ascertained in 773 of the antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first six months of 2021. Of these, 610 (79%) involved adult victims; 120 (16%) involved victims who were minors; 12 (1%) involved victims over the age of 65; in 31 instances (4%), mixed groups of adults and minors were abused. The percentage split between adult and minor victims is more balanced than it was in January to June 2020's more typical breakdown of 85% and 8% respectively. This is a consequence of the surge in school-based antisemitism observed in the first half of this year, increasing the number and proportion of children targeted with anti-Jewish hate.

## VICTIMS

where the age and gender are known



**57%**

of victims were **male**



**36%**

of victims were **female**



**7%**

of victims were **groups of males and females**



**79%**

of victims were **adults**



**16%**

of victims were **minors**



**4%**

of victims were **mixed age groups**

## INCIDENT OFFENDERS

It is not always easy to ascertain the ethnicity, gender or age of antisemitic incident offenders. Many face-to-face incidents involve fleeting, nonverbal, public encounters in which the offenders may not be fully visible or leave the scene quickly. Victim and witness testimonies may be vague and disjointed, which is understandable given the nature of the ordeal that they have experienced. Many incidents do not involve face-to-face contact, and it is therefore not always possible to obtain a physical description of the perpetrator. Furthermore, those who commit antisemitic offences online may choose to completely anonymise themselves, which makes it almost impossible to garner any information about the person behind the abuse. On the other hand, if social media profiles are not anonymised, they can provide some personal details of offenders, such as a name, photograph or approximate location.

While it is possible to collect data regarding the ethnic appearance of incident offenders, this data is not direct evidence of the offenders' religious affiliations. The content of an antisemitic letter may reveal the motivation of the offender, but it would be a mistake to assume the ethnicity or religion of a hate mail sender solely on the basis of the discourse they employ.

CST received a description of the ethnic appearance of the offender or offenders in 455 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded over the first six months of 2021. Of these, 151 (33%) were described as white – North European; 19 (4%) as white – South European; 48 (11%) as black; 75 (16%) as South Asian; four (1%) as Southeast Asian; finally, 158 (35%) were described as Arab or North African. There is a key difference here in the offenders described to CST between January and June 2021, compared to periods when there is no escalation in conflict involving Israel: a far higher proportion of offenders are of North African, Arab or South Asian origin. It is a contrast from the first half

of 2020, for example, when 67% of antisemitic incident offenders were described to CST as white – North European; 2% as white – South European; 16% as black; 5% as South Asian; less than 1% as Southeast Asian; and 10% as Arab or North African. A similar change in the relative proportions of described incident offenders was seen during the previous conflict in Israel and Gaza, in July and August 2014, although this is the first time that more offenders are reported to be of Arab or North African descent than any other ethnicity.<sup>9</sup> It is important to bear in mind that these details rely on the subjective and fleeting judgement of witnesses and victims.

A description of the gender of the offender or offenders was obtained by CST in 706 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2021. Of these, the offender was described as male in 583 incidents (83% of incidents where the offender's gender was obtained), female in 109 incidents (15%), and mixed groups of males and females in 14 incidents (2%).

In 674 of the 1,308 reports of antisemitism between January and June 2021, the approximate age of the offender or offenders was provided. Among these, 536 (80%) involved adult offenders; in 135 cases (20%) the perpetrators were minors; there were only three instances (less than 1%) where the offenders were a mix of adults and minors. Once again, using the first six months of 2020 as a barometer for a typical age distribution of offenders during periods without trigger events in the Middle East, there is a less uneven spread between adult and minor perpetrators. Over the same timeframe last year, 91% of antisemitic offenders were adults and 9% were minors. This point reflects the rise in antisemitic incidents in UK schools during the recent conflict.

<sup>9</sup> [Antisemitic Incidents Report 2014](#), CST, 2015

## DISCOURSE, MOTIVES & IDEOLOGY

CST attempts to assess the number of antisemitic incidents that take place in the UK each year behind which there is evidence of political, religious, or ideological discourse or motivation. CST now also monitors the number of instances where conspiracy-fuelled sentiments are present: stereotypical tropes about the Jewish people's power, influence, money, and exaggerating or inventing the tragedies of the Holocaust can be especially prevalent in online expressions of antisemitism. It is common for the same incident to combine two or more of these discourses, even if they would appear ideologically incompatible. Such seeming contradictions are entirely representative of the multifaceted nature of contemporary antisemitism. Historic, simplistic prejudices have been manipulated and deployed by such a vast array of social, religious, cultural and political forces over such a long period of time, that a much more layered and complex landscape of antisemitic language and imagery has emerged. Partly as a consequence of this, the use of political rhetoric and evidence of political motivation are not synonymous: for example, a person who shouts "Heil Hitler" at a Jewish passer-by might be motivated by far-right extremist ideology, or they might simply know that this phrase will cause offence and upset to Jewish people.

In the first six months of 2021, CST recorded 14 antisemitic incidents connected to specific political parties. All were related to the Labour Party, classed as such for the offender's expressed affiliation or support, because the abuse targeted the party's members or politicians, because it was expressed by party members or politicians, or because it appeared motivated by news and stories related to Labour. This is a substantial decrease from January to June 2020, when 98 of the 103 antisemitic incidents linked to political parties were linked to the Labour Party. This striking reduction strongly suggests that antisemitic

incidents are less prevalent in Labour Party contexts than previously; and may also be explained by the fact that the issue of alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party has not been as prominent in news, media and public consciousness as it was in previous years. In the first six months of 2020, the change in Labour Party leadership inspired a wave of online abuse by people who felt that Jeremy Corbyn's tenure had been undermined and destabilised by the wider Jewish community. The year before, Jewish Members of Parliament left the Labour Party, citing the problem of antisemitism as a reason behind their decision. In both cases, antisemitic abuse was directed at Jewish MPs and ally organisations working to combat this exact hatred.

There were 13 incidents in which aspects of Judaism were attacked or deliberately mischaracterised for antisemitic purposes, fewer than the 23 such incidents reported from January to June 2020. Of these, six focused on religious literature (compared to nine in the first six months of 2020), six manipulated ideas taken from religious scripture (seven between January and June last year), and one focused on religious traditions (seven in the first half of 2020). Sixty expressions of antisemitism employed stereotypes or dehumanising language and images, a slight rise from the 55 such incidents recorded over the same timeframe in 2020.

Conspiracy theories were evident in 108 of the 1,308 incidents reported between January and June 2021, compared to 191 in the opening six months of 2020. From these, 87 spoke of Jewish influence over global politics, media, finance and other walks of life (compared to 147 in the first half of 2020); 12 involved falsehoods regarding religious rituals and practices (just over the 11 recorded from January to June 2020); and three aimed to spread myths about the origins of Jewishness, with the intention to

undermine any notion of modern Jewish identity (less than the 12 such incidents reported over the same period last year).

In 277 incidents – 21% of the 1,308 cases of antisemitism reported to CST in the first half of 2021 – the offender or offenders made reference to Hitler, the Nazis, the Holocaust, employed discourse aligned with the Nazi period, and/or punctuated their abuse with a Nazi salute or swastika, compared to 207 from January to June 2020. Of these, 51 glorified the Holocaust, its perpetrators and/or their ideas, or expressed a desire for the mass extermination of Jews to happen again (a rise from the 37 such incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020). Twelve incidents contained the denial of either the scale of the Holocaust, or its having happened at all (falling from 33 over the same timeframe in 2020). There were 59 instances in which far-right motivation was evidenced, wherein alignment with far-right extremist ideology or beliefs was expressed beyond – though often alongside – the simple and superficial appropriation of Nazi-era references, whereas 66 incidents displayed this in the first half of 2020.

There were 43 incidents that directly compared Israel to the Nazis, rising from the 36 incidents employing this antisemitic equivalence from January to June 2020. These 43 cases comprise a portion of the 693 incidents referencing Israel and Palestine, demonstrating anti-Zionist motivation, or both. Predictably, this has been the most common individual brand of discourse, present in 53% of the incidents reported to CST in the first half of the year and a significant increase from the 240 such incidents recorded between January and June 2020. This includes occasions where the subject matter was directly alluded to (e.g. shouts of “*Free Palestine*” at visibly Jewish people), where there were explicit calls for the destruction of Israel made at Jews, and where the motive was obvious by context and intention (e.g. cars draped in Palestinian flags driving and making noise through Jewish communities). The terms “*Zionism*” or “*Zionist*”

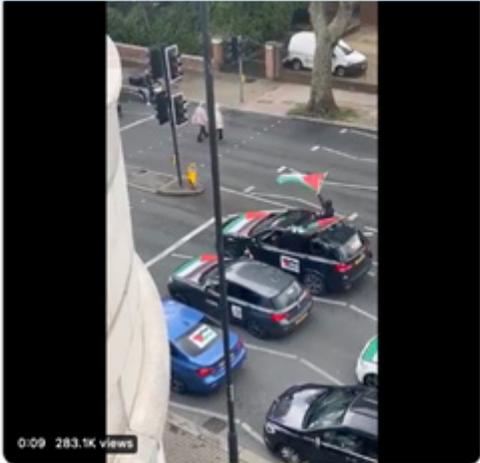
were specifically used in 68 incidents, often as by-words for “*Jewishness*” and “*Jew*”, rising from 64 in the first six months of 2020. An additional 32 incidents contained discourse relating to Islam or Muslims, an increase from the seven reported from January to June 2020, while 13 showed evidence of Islamist extremist ideology, rising from the four such incidents recorded across the same timeframe in 2020. The increases from 2020 in incidents containing the discourses described in this paragraph show the distinction between how, and how much, antisemitism is expressed in the UK when there is a significant trigger event in the Middle East, and a period when no such trigger event occurs. A further 13 antisemitic incidents evidenced another religious ideology, falling from 15 in the opening half of last year.

The volume of incidents reported to CST related to Israel and Palestine is not just emblematic of how circumstances in the Middle East can dominate social discourse across different age groups and sectors of society, or how often discussion of the topic incorporates into anti-Jewish abuse. It is also indicative of the way modern-day antisemitism follows the news cycle, latching onto current affairs as a vessel for its dissemination. Six hundred and fifty-four of these 693 antisemitic incidents were recorded in May and June, during or in the immediate aftermath of the intensification of violence between Israel and Hamas. This spike illuminates the almost galvanising effect of a trigger event in the Middle East, and suggests that many people who do not necessarily spend the rest of the year talking about Israel and Palestine are suddenly mobilised and invested only when the topic ranks high in public consciousness. This theory is demonstrated by the nature of these 693 cases of antisemitism. Among them, the most common single type of incident did not showcase any of the more layered rhetoric dissected in this chapter, but simply involved shouts of “*Free Palestine*” at Jewish targets. These words have become somewhat anthemic, and an easy way for offenders to feel part of a social movement

without truly engaging with the complexity of the cause, and without necessarily giving thought or care to how their words can translate into antisemitic hate speech when directed at unsuspecting Jewish people.

Of the 1,308 incidents recorded by CST in the first half of 2021, 107 (8%) involved a combination of two or more of the above political, religious and racist discourses, conspiracy theories and ideologies. The multiple sources and references that can exist within a single antisemitic incident highlights the complexity of contemporary anti-Jewish hate and exposes the confusion of offenders, whose prejudice is often unfocused, composed instead of various and disparate notions. It is perhaps an error to believe that antisemitism is the result of a conscious rationale in the mind of the perpetrator, even if certain tropes lead them to feel justified in their hatred. Rather, it is based in unexamined and unchallenged 'truths' embedded in the collective consciousness, where the same narrative can be adopted and repurposed by perpetrators across the social, political and ideological spectra.

This pattern is exhibited in some of the antisemitic reactions to the escalation of violence in the Middle East. Pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel sentiment is often assumed to stem predominantly from the left wing, but even here, 31 of the 51 incidents that contained comments glorifying the Holocaust occurred in May and June, in the context of Israel's war with Hamas.



0:09 283.1K views

931 2.9K 2.1K

Replying to [redacted] and @CST\_UK

**Auschwitz Concentration Camp**  
Where hitler f---ed their mothers and daughters before 🤡



you just wait until a "new Hitler arrives"  
guess he was right in killing you all  
bitches

Replying to [redacted]

I think its time to give Jews the hitler treatment again... its like they are asking for it.

bullshit in schools

The youngest tree in palestine is older than the oldest israeli bitch

The reason you are there is because you got kicked of every single country out there

No one wanted Jews

America kicked you out

You went to Britain

Britain had been conquering palestine at the time so they made a deal with the Jews to leave Britain and they'd get palestine

Get your history right before you come and talk

That depends if you got history tho

Jews got no history except being slaughtered everywhere they go

The only history you got is hitler burning your asses off

Cause guess what no one likes you

lame ass worthless Jews you got no lives

I wish someone else would come and burn you out like hitler

So f---k Israel and f---k all Jews

May 9

Almost everyone talking about events in Jerusalem - even tragically some Jewish community organisations - either do not know the basic facts or are just jumping at a chance to bash Israel. 1/4

15 92 266

May 9

The Arabs facing eviction - did not have to move. They are squatters - living on land owned by Jews - who were offered by the courts an opportunity to have their tenancy protected. 2/4

3 35 110

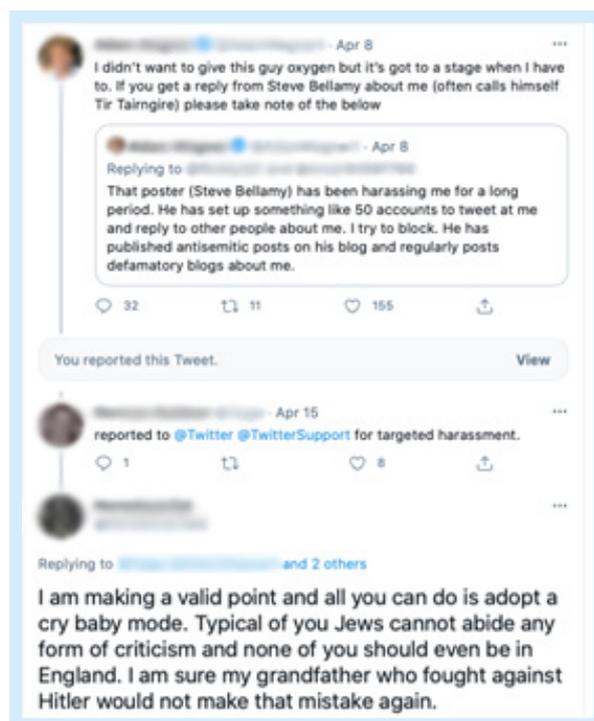
Replying to [redacted]

Just wait for few more years...the Wrath of Almighty on the Jews is on the way

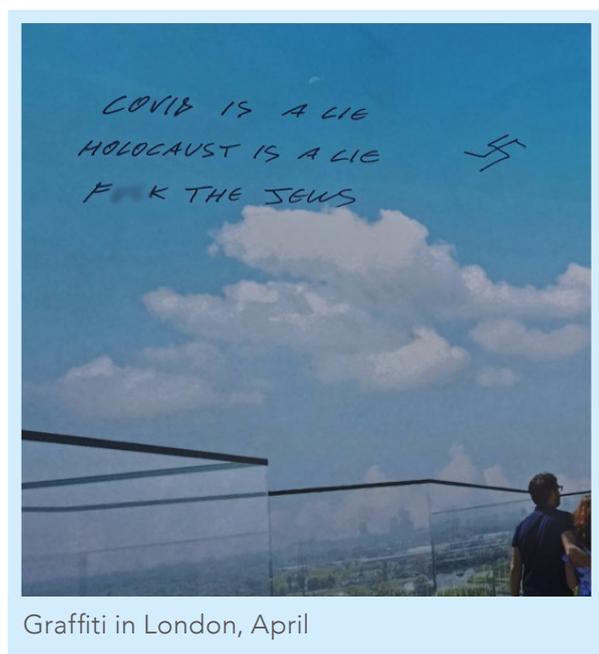


In these examples, far-right, fascistic, genocidal antisemitic values and actions are championed by people who profess to stand up for the oppressed.

It is noteworthy that the 277 occurrences of Holocaust-related abuse make it, after references to Israel and Palestine, the second most prevalent discourse in antisemitic incidents reported from January to June 2021. As seen above, it is applied within the context of the conflict in the Middle East, but is also seemingly the first port of call for people who seek to proclaim their anti-Jewish hate, almost regardless of the subject matter that elicits their prejudice.



In these three images, the wider trend of both indiscriminate and targeted antisemitic abuse being laced with Holocaust-related rhetoric is displayed. The first – a reply to a post by the Auschwitz Museum Twitter account – invokes Holocaust glorification in relation to the Jewish owners of Manchester United and the decision to join the European Super League. The second mourns the thwarting of Hitler's "Final Solution" in response to a Jewish man tweeting about antisemitic harassment. The third is graffiti that denies the existence of COVID-19, denies the Holocaust, insults Jews, and depicts a symbol of anti-Jewish hatred. These three images, unrelated in every aspect but the chosen discourse of abuse, is a snapshot of how ready antisemitic incident offenders across the board are to appropriate a source of collective, cross-generational trauma as a means of inflicting further pain on Jewish people.



Graffiti in London, April

The photograph of the graffiti attests to the persistence of a variant of anti-Jewish discourse that has emerged since the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020. In the first half of 2021, CST recorded 41 incidents containing antisemitic rhetoric alongside allusion to the pandemic, an increase from the 26 incidents of this kind reported from January to June 2020. These

include conspiracy theories about Jewish involvement in creating and spreading COVID-19 or creating and spreading the myth of COVID-19 for various malevolent and financial purposes; expressed hopes that Jewish people catch the virus and die from it; and the misappropriation of Holocaust-era imagery and propaganda, in some cases comparing the lockdown or vaccination programmes to the persecution and genocide of Jews. Some of these are shown in the images below.



Graffiti in London, March



A yellow star at an anti-lockdown protest in London, March



Alan Lacey • 1st

Independent Financial Adviser in Leeds,...  
8m

Charles Burdhardt: Would a yellow star rather than the paper vaccine passport be more appropriate for you Charles?

LinkedIn comment, April



www.StopNewNormal.net response to a recent farcical newspaper headline. Vaccines are actually a gateway to morbidity and mortality. This cynical newspaper headline is in the tradition of the Nazi slogan "Arbeit Macht Frei" (work sets you free). Where as in reality the truth is the opposite.

Concept idea Piers Corbyn and drawing by Alexander Haaton.

WEST END FINAL  
**Evening Standard**

FREE LONDON FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2020

24/7 ONLINE NEWS STANDARD.CO.UK

AS POLL SHOWS 25% OF LONDONERS UNLIKELY TO TAKE JAB, EXPERTS UNITE TO URGE:

**VACCINES ARE SAFE  
PATH TO FREEDOM**

Leaflet posted in London, January

This rhetoric is further proof of the way in which antisemitism finds new life in the news agenda and popular discourse. Its rapid manifestation at the pandemic's outset – and its durability through the months of uncertainty since – are additional unfortunate legacies of COVID-19. They highlight once again the adaptability and opportunism of contemporary antisemitism and its perpetrators, who repackage familiar and deep-rooted tropes, conspiracy theories and misconceptions to fit the present context and fulfil their desire to vent their innermost, anti-Jewish hatred.

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS

Of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the opening six months of 2021, 929 occurred across the regions of Greater London and Greater Manchester; the UK cities where the largest Jewish populations reside.

In the former, 748 incidents were reported to have occurred, marking a rise of 51% from the 496 Greater London incidents recorded from January to June 2020. Greater Manchester's total of 181 is an increase of 159% from the 70 incidents that took place in the same area during the equivalent period in 2020.

CST recorded at least one antisemitic incident in all but two of the 33 Metropolitan Police boroughs of London. Of the 748 incidents recorded across Greater London in the first six months of 2021, 264 occurred in Barnet, the local authority that is home to the largest Jewish population in the UK. There were 71 instances of antisemitism recorded in Hackney, 60 in Westminster, 54 in Camden, and 34 in Tower Hamlets. Whereas Barnet, Hackney and Camden are all areas where significant parts of London's Jewish communities reside, Westminster and Tower Hamlets are not, yet incidents there have surged from the 34 and 12 cases reported in those boroughs respectively in the first half of 2020. In Westminster's case, this is in part due to the protests that took place in Central London regarding the conflict in the Middle East. CST received reports of antisemitic abuse at both pro-Palestine and pro-Israel demonstrations, contributing to Westminster's total. In Tower Hamlets' case, there has been a spate of antisemitic graffiti in the borough, and CST has worked with the police to identify the serial offender. Within Greater London's statistics, 33 incidents were reported to have taken place on property that falls under the jurisdiction of the British Transport Police. A further 37 were online incidents where it is known that either victim or offender was based in London, but a more specific location could not be established.

Of Greater Manchester's 181 antisemitic incidents recorded for January to June 2021, 87 happened in Salford, 32 in the City of Manchester, 26 in Bury, 11 in Stockport and seven in Trafford. Twenty-four (13%) of the 181 reported incidents in Greater Manchester were in the categories of Assault or Extreme Violence. In all of the police regions where more than ten antisemitic incidents were reported in the first half of 2021, only Essex recorded a higher proportion of direct physical attacks than Greater Manchester (4 of 18 incidents, or 22%).

Just as these communal hubs' figures have risen, the combined proportional contribution of Greater London and Greater Manchester's to the six-monthly total has also grown, from 65% in 2020 to 71% in 2021. These increases are largely the result of the antisemitic reactions to the escalation of violence in the Middle East, of which a considerable number were directed in person at the largest Jewish populations in the UK and the people who form them. This is exemplified by the fact that 101 (86%) of the 117 instances of antisemitic abusive speech or gestures from vehicles reported in the first half of 2021 occurred either in Greater London (49 incidents) or in Greater Manchester (52 incidents). Of these 101 cases, 86 took place in May and June, the majority of which were in response to events in Israel and Gaza and involved offenders seeking out and driving through Jewish neighbourhoods, shouting about the war, flying Palestinian flags, or both. As the regions with the most sizeable and visible centres of Jewish life, Jewish communities in Greater London and Greater Manchester were often the designated targets.

While it is not surprising that most antisemitic incidents take place in areas where Jewish communities are most established, there has still been a broad spread of incidents across the UK, reported in all but four police regions from January to June 2021 (Cleveland, Derbyshire,

Dorset and Suffolk). One possible reason for this is the ongoing role that online forums play as a medium for the easy dissemination of antisemitic content. The 355 instances of online antisemitism comprise the second-highest figure ever recorded by CST in the first six months of a year. It demonstrates how the accessibility and convenience of social media platforms in particular have granted a wider demographic the opportunity to vent their prejudice far and wide, without the need to be physically near Jewish spaces and people and, too often, without consequence.

As online antisemitism remains a constant reality of contemporary anti-Jewish hate, CST's social media footprint has also widened, and with it the capacity for the public to report antisemitism. CST has also increased its precision in determining the location within the UK of either the victim or offender of online incidents, and just 15 of the 355 online incidents are recorded as 'Online Unknown', compared to 17 of 364 in the first half of 2020.

Another factor behind this spread is the deepening relationship between CST and police services across the country. CST benefits from data-sharing agreements with more constabularies than ever before, which has played a crucial role in developing a more detailed picture of where and how antisemitism happens in the UK.

Aside from the locations already mentioned, the police regions with the highest reported antisemitic incident totals were Northumbria with 45 incidents (compared to 40 in the first half of 2020); West Yorkshire with 41 incidents (an increase from the 36 recorded in the same timeframe in 2020); Hertfordshire with 37 (rising from 12 between January and June 2020, linked to the reopening of schools in March 2021 and the volume of school-related antisemitism reported in the context of the conflict between Israel and Hamas); Merseyside with 26 incidents (up from the 19 reported in the first six months of 2020); and Scotland with 22 (compared to 21 from January to June 2020).

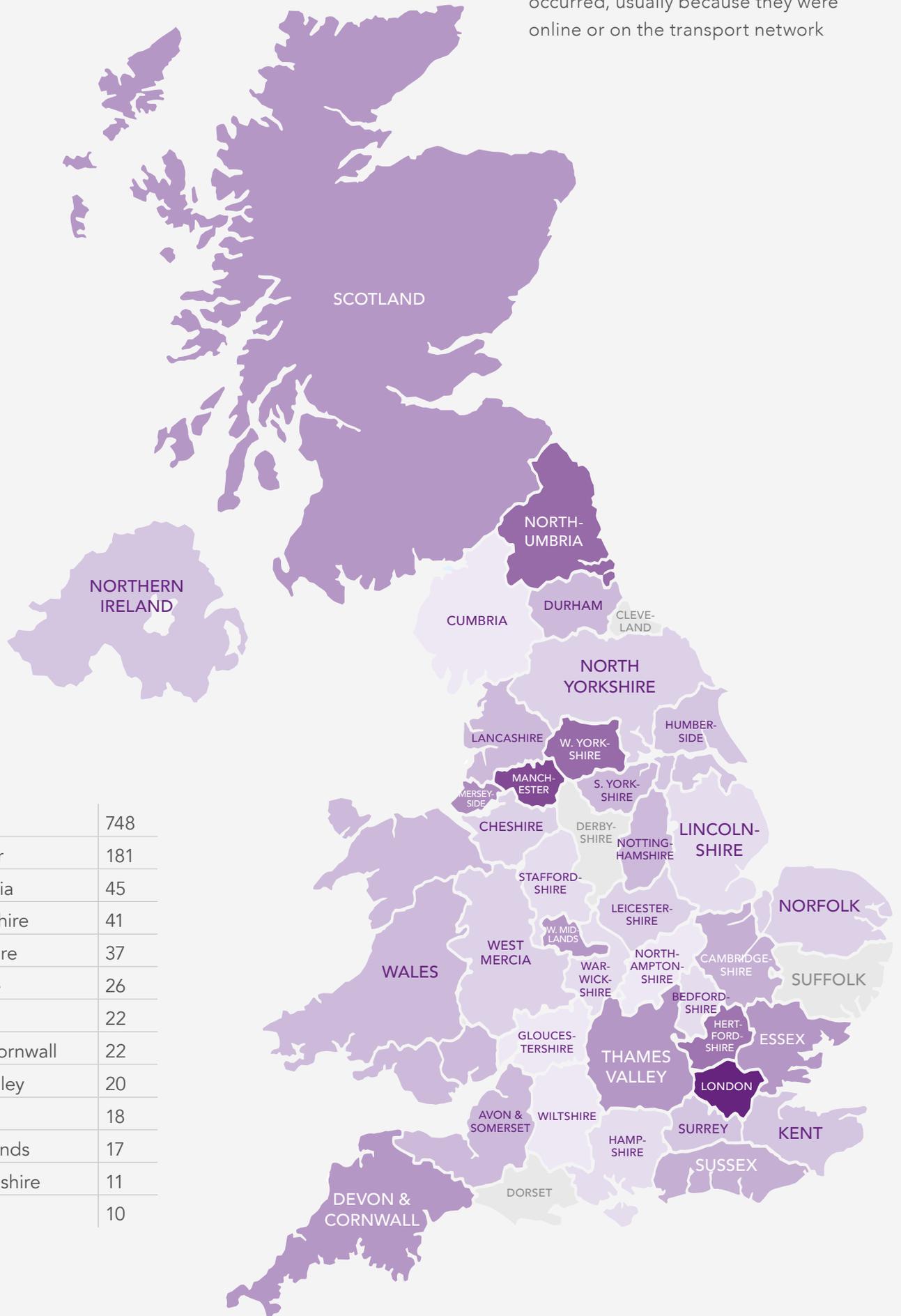
Outside of Greater London and Greater Manchester's boroughs, the areas within police regions with the highest totals of reported antisemitic incidents were Leeds in West Yorkshire (30 incidents), Gateshead in Northumbria (28 incidents), Liverpool in Merseyside (25 incidents), Birmingham in West Midlands (17 incidents), and Borehamwood and Elstree in Hertfordshire (15 incidents). Included within all of the figures in this chapter are 42 cases of antisemitism that took place on public transport or at public transport stations (16 on London buses, 11 on the London Underground and 15 on other transport) that fall under the authority of British Transport Police.



Graffiti on a playground in Scotland, March

# INCIDENT LOCATIONS

In 17 incidents it was not possible to identify a specific location where they occurred, usually because they were online or on the transport network



London	748
Manchester	181
Northumbria	45
West Yorkshire	41
Hertfordshire	37
Merseyside	26
Scotland	22
Devon & Cornwall	22
Thames Valley	20
Essex	18
West Midlands	17
Cambridgeshire	11
Sussex	10

## REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

Not every incident recorded by CST has an identifiable victim. Not every incident recorded by CST has an identifiable perpetrator; but every incident recorded by CST has a reporter. Antisemitic incidents are reported to CST in a number of ways, most commonly by telephone, email, the CST website, via CST's social media profiles, or in person to CST staff and volunteers. Incidents can be reported to CST by the victim, a witness, or an individual or organisation acting on their behalf. In 2001, CST was accorded third-party reporting status by the police. CST has a national Information Sharing Agreement with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and similar agreements with a number of regional forces, which allow CST to share antisemitic incident reports, fully anonymised to comply with data protection requirements, so that both CST and the police can glean as complete a picture as possible of the number and nature of reported antisemitic incidents. CST began sharing antisemitic incident data with Greater Manchester Police in 2011, followed by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2012. Now, using the national agreement, CST shares anonymised antisemitic incident data with several forces around the UK. Any incidents that are reported to both CST and the police are excluded from this process to ensure there is no 'double counting' of incidents.

This collaboration continues to prove immensely valuable. From January to June 2021, 524 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were reported by the police. This comprises 40% of the total and is the highest number of antisemitic incidents reported to CST by the police in the first half of any year. Of these 524 reports, 323 came via the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), 83 from Greater Manchester

Police (GMP), 33 from Northumbria Police, 18 courtesy of West Yorkshire Police, 18 via Devon & Cornwall Police, and 49 from other police services around the country. Some of these partnerships have existed for a long time, others are much more recent, and it is a testament to the work invested in establishing and maintaining these relationships that explains the rise in antisemitic incidents reported to CST via the data sharing agreements with police.

In the first six months of 2021, 364 of the 1,308 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were reported by the victim, while 204 were reported by a witness to antisemitism, whether exhibited in a public space or online. In 110 cases, a friend or relative of the victim related details of the incident, accounting for 8% of all incidents reported to CST. This is a numerical and proportional rise from the 21 antisemitic incidents reported by close associates of the victim from January to June 2020, 2% of the total of 875. This increase indicates the increase in antisemitism directed at minors, particularly in a school setting – cases that were usually reported by the parents of the children involved. CST staff reported 54 occurrences of antisemitism, which includes online abuse directed at CST accounts, while 34 incidents were reported by security guards at Jewish premises. An additional nine incidents came to CST's attention via media reports, seven through CST volunteers, whereas one report was made by Manchester Shomrim and one by a student chaplaincy.

Every single report helps CST better understand the nature and scale of antisemitism in the UK today. Every single report better enables CST to protect and facilitate Jewish life.

# ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT FIGURES, JANUARY–JUNE

## Antisemitic incident figures by category, January–June 2010–2021

Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Extreme Violence	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Assault	45	42	34	29	22	45	45	80	62	85	52	87
Damage & Desecration	47	35	29	20	27	36	32	54	44	39	33	56
Threats	19	15	20	18	19	39	48	58	56	50	45	85
Abusive Behaviour	211	197	223	154	238	374	473	582	616	727	739	1,073
Literature	3	5	4	2	4	5	10	12	32	10	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>1,308</b>

## Antisemitic incident figures by month, 2010–2021

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	30	45	39	33	53	109	81	155	106	119	188	89
February	48	54	52	38	43	88	69	134	119	182	142	116
March	54	49	75	23	39	83	82	110	119	171	119	126
April	61	45	48	44	58	75	105	142	151	147	109	145
May	50	58	44	48	51	60	140	121	182	150	138	639
June	82	43	54	37	66	86	131	124	133	142	179	193
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>1,308</b>

## Antisemitic incident figures, full breakdown, 2021

Month	Category	Extreme Violence	Assault	Damage & Desecration	Threats	Abusive Behaviour	Literature	MONTH TOTAL
January		1	4	2	4	76	2	89
February		0	7	6	2	101	0	116
March		0	6	7	6	106	1	126
April		0	9	4	7	124	1	145
May		1	42	26	53	516	1	639
June		0	19	11	13	150	0	193
<b>CATEGORY TOTAL</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1,308</b>

## CST'S MISSION

- To work at all times for the physical protection and defence of British Jews.
- To represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- To promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- To facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- To help those who are victims of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- To promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- To speak responsibly at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.



[www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk)



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Community Security Trust



CSTmedia



National Emergency Number (24-hour) **0800 032 3263**

London (Head Office) **020 8457 9999**

Manchester (Northern Regional Office) **0161 792 6666**

