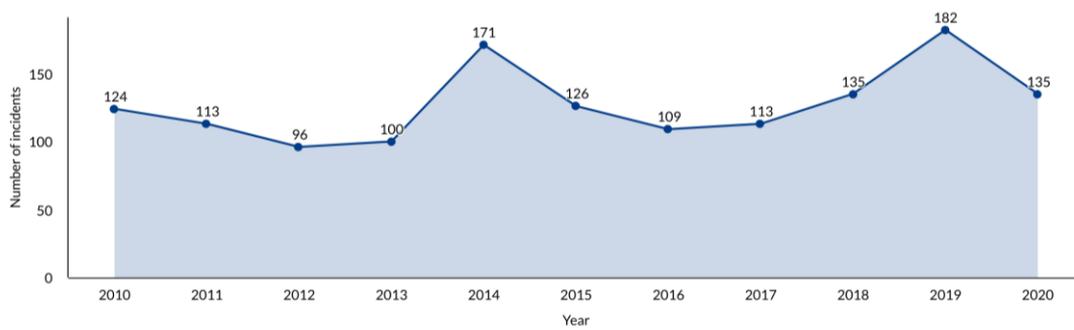


CIDI Antisemitism Monitor 2020: a summary

[CIDI's annual incidents report](#) registered **135 antisemitic incidents in the Netherlands in the year 2020**. This is the same number of incidents as registered in 2018, and a significantly lower number than in 2019, when a spike of 182 incidents was registered. This is CIDI's 37th annual report on antisemitic incidents.

The year 2020 saw a steep rise in the number of conspiracy theories and theorists, both on social media and in 'real life'. Jews are portrayed as the cause and/or beneficiaries of the coronavirus with an alarming and growing frequency, in the Netherlands and worldwide. Still, it is good to note that tackling antisemitism has become an issue of priority in Dutch politics, both locally as well as nationally. There is much work to be done, but we hope that the foundations laid in 2020 will lead to a better future for Dutch Jews.

Total number of antisemitic incidents reported to CIDI since 2010



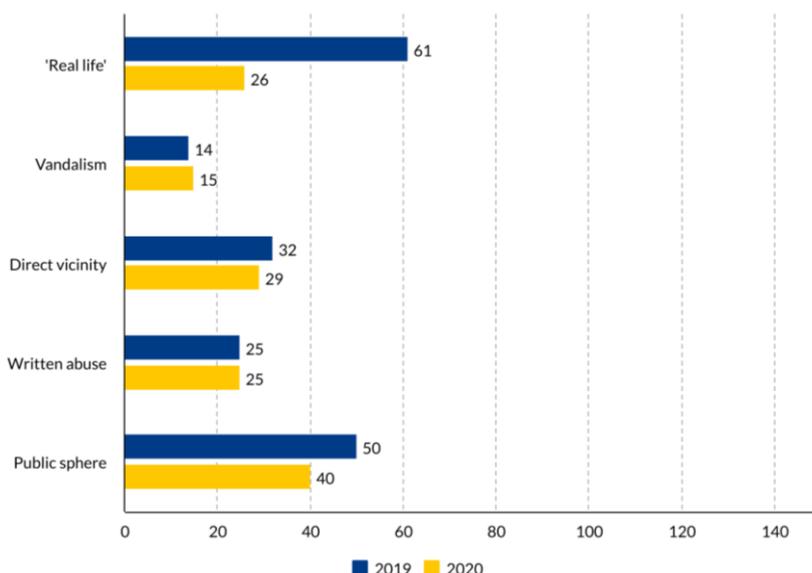
At face value the drop in incidents seems positive. However, not all antisemitic incidents are reported to CIDI, therefore the picture is not as clear as we would like. The Monitor does show trends, and 2020 was an exceptional year. Due to the lockdowns and the lack of large public gatherings, the total number of physical interactions of all kinds plummeted. Usually, most antisemitic incidents occur in public, when people are recognised as being Jewish. Back in 2018, 75 percent of Dutch Jews hid their identities to prevent threats. A drop in 2020 is thus arguably not a big surprise.

In 2020 we counted 26 incidents in the category 'real life', which denotes a direct confrontation between victim and perpetrator. This gives us a drop of 57% compared to 2019. We do not expect to see this drop continuing after the end of lockdown.

Further study into the reported incidents shows that while absolute numbers of antisemitic incidents went down, the nature of the incidents grew increasingly **toxic**. By and large, the incidents reported to CIDI were more worrying than mere verbal abuse aimed at Jews, or the existence of prejudices which lead to antisemitic incidents.

Conspiracy theories about 'Jewish control', including the belief that Jews created the coronavirus, rose dramatically last year. Usually, but not exclusively, on social media. The number of incidents in Dutch **politics and media** rose. **Right-wing extremism** seems to have gained popularity from societal resistance to measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19, while according to intelligence agencies **radical Islam** has not significantly increased or decreased in popularity in the Netherlands. Both are forms of extremism in which antisemitism plays a central role.

Incidents per category, 2019-2020



The 135 incidents registered by CIDI exclude antisemitic incidents on social media. The reason for that is simple: there is simply too much online hate speech to monitor, even if we only focus on Dutch content. Even so, online discourse plays an important role in radicalisation of young people and the spread of conspiracy theories. Closed environments, like workplaces or schools, are vulnerable to hate speech sent via private messaging apps. Examples of this can be found in this report.

What constitutes an incident?

An incident is an occurrence of an antisemitic act, which may be a repeated event. For instance, when the same person verbally abuses a number of people because of their (alleged) Jewish identity in the same way, this is counted as one incident, even when there are multiple victims. This prevents a biased measurement of antisemitic occurrences. However, it also means that large-scale incidents contribute the same to totals as less significant ones.

CIDI calls for new research into ways to map online antisemitism. Last year we asked research agency Kantar to map Dutch online antisemitism. They uncovered 747 antisemitic tweets and 286 websites with antisemitic content (78% of which were blogs with regularly antisemitic comments). A similarly thorough investigation into Facebook and Instagram, the two most popular social media in the Netherlands, is not possible at the time of writing due to limits imposed by said platforms.

The rising trend of antisemitism, confirmed by the previous CIDI-monitor, did not go unnoticed by politicians. This is an important first step in addressing

the problem. New, important measures were approved through a widely supported proposal by VVD and ChristenUnie, passed by a majority of the Dutch parliament in 2020.

Furthermore, more and more councils passed local legislation to tackle antisemitism. New initiatives from schools and civic organisations also play a major role in the fight against antisemitism.

To truly turn the tide of antisemitism increasingly taking root in Dutch society, and to address the problem at its core, more action is needed. CIDI suggests the following actions:

- Invest in the capacity of the national police force to investigate and prosecute discrimination offences better, for example by widening investigative powers and with specialised detectives
- Force social media platforms to improve their hate speech policies, and actually, effectively enforce these policies.
- Invest more in public education, especially on the subject of Judaism and Jewish identity. Pupils should learn that Jews are a part of modern-day Dutch society, and that Judaism is not merely a historical curiosity
- Offer advice and educational resources to teachers, during their training and afterwards, so they are better equipped to teach 'difficult topics' like the persecution of Jews and the Second World War
- Broadly implement the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in society and government. This will help people recognise antisemitism more easily

While we see worrying trends, CIDI also sees a lot of societal willingness to fight antisemitism. That willingness is of great importance to increase tolerance and mutual respect. It should therefore be translated into concrete actions. CIDI encourages these actions and offers help, advice and expertise to anyone who wants to contribute to the fight against hate.

