

ANTISEMITISM SINCE 7th OCTOBER 2023



KEY POINTS:

GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM, WHILE EVER-PRESENT, HAS BEEN ENERGIZED BY THE HAMAS MASSACRE OF 7TH OCTOBER 2023.

ANTI-ZIONIST ANTISEMITISM* FOUND EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, MAINSTREAM AND SOCIAL MEDIA, IN POLITICS, ACADEMIA, NGOS AND ELSEWHERE.

THE RESURGENCE OF ANTISEMITISM HAS REINFORCED THE EXISTENTIAL NECESSITY OF ZIONISM AND ISRAEL.

Further Resources:

- Go to [Antisemitism](#) on our website to learn more



Historical context

Antisemitism – hatred of Jews – has blighted humanity for millennia. The European continent has usually been regarded as the most antisemitic region in the world but the Middle East currently occupies that unenviable position according to the [Anti-Defamation League](#). The late [Rabbi \(Lord\) Jonathan Sacks](#) gave an overview of the phenomenon: in the Middle Ages, Jews were hated for their religion; in the 19th and 20th centuries for their race; today, for their nation state.

What happened after 7th October 2023?

Immediately following the brutal mass terrorist attack on Israelis (and other nationals) in southern Israel on 7th October 2023, demonstrators took to the streets of cities around the world [chanting anti-Israeli and antisemitic slogans](#). Many of these events occurred before Israel launched its retaliatory operation against Hamas and its allies in Gaza and elsewhere.

Over the succeeding months, Jewish communities everywhere have been subjected to disparagement, intimidation, soaring hate speech on social media and, on occasions, physical assaults. In addition, heavily-biased media, NGO and political commentary – some of which appears to represent a form of ‘soft’ or covert antisemitism – has engendered an atmosphere that has undermined the sense of personal and communal security that Jews in many countries had taken for granted for decades.

While some commentators have sought to interpret the global reaction to the conflict as mere criticism of Israel, a surge in antisemitism has been confirmed statistically by NGOs such as the UK Community Security Trust (CST). They reported that 2023 was the year with the highest ever number of antisemitic incidents in the UK in any calendar year since monitoring began over a decade ago. [Of the 4,103 incidents, 66% occurred after the 7th October attack](#), the highest weekly number of incidents was recorded in the days immediately following the massacre, peaking on 11th October, indicating that it was the Hamas terror attack, rather than Israel’s military response in Gaza, that sparked most of the antisemitism in the UK.

Conclusions and implications

The atrocities committed by Hamas in October 2023 generated a brief outpouring of sympathy for the Israeli victims but this was soon overtaken by a huge upsurge in global antisemitism, as confirmed by data sources, including the UK’s CST. In numerous countries, large rallies opposing Israel and, in many cases, portraying Hamas’s actions as ‘resistance’, have been accompanied by the chanting of Jihadist slogans such as ‘**From the river to the sea/Palestine shall be free**’ and ‘there is only one solution/intifada revolution.’ These are direct references to the **anti-Zionist and genocidal rhetoric** of Hamas and related terrorist groups calling for the destruction of the State of Israel and the murder of its inhabitants.

More measured though nevertheless highly critical comments on Israel were expressed by mainstream journalists, politicians, UN officials, academic leaders and others, thus generating an atmosphere of hostility to the world’s only Jewish state and, by extension, the large majority of Jews for whom Israel forms a core part of their identity and who have close personal connections to the country. Beyond such overt verbal and physical expressions of antisemitism, antisemitic sentiment seems to have motivated the silence of many following the 7th October terrorist attack and the ongoing captivity of Israeli hostages in Gaza. This has been particularly noted in relation to UN Women and other global women’s organisations that have either not reacted or have been very slow to condemn the horrendous sexual attacks carried out by the terrorists.

Among the lessons to be drawn from these events are the following:

1. Antisemitism remains a potent global force that has been energised by the Hamas massacre of 7th October. Hatred of Jews and the Jewish state may be overt or subtle, with anti-Zionism or harsh criticism of Israel serving as camouflage for anti-Semites.
2. The widespread expression of antisemitic tropes by pro-Palestinian demonstrators, social media influencers and activists since the massacre, and the war it triggered, suggest that ignorance and/or prejudice may be a strong motivating factor for many people.
3. Continuing efforts to educate the public, especially young people, about the nature and dangers of antisemitism, and its relationship to anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism, are necessary. [The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) definition offers a useful tool in this regard.
4. The bottom line for most Jews, both in the diaspora and Israel, is the continuing existential necessity of Zionism and Israel despite the renewed concerted effort to delegitimise and disempower the Jewish state by those with an antisemitic agenda.

*Israeli human rights activist Natan Sharansky, proposed a method to distinguish between mere criticism of Israel and antisemitism. He called it the Three Ds: demonisation, double standards and delegitimation. Following 7th October, a fourth D may be added – denialism, since many ‘critics of Israel’ have insisted that the atrocities either didn’t occur or have been exaggerated.