

ANTISEMITIC HATE CRIMES
AND INCIDENTS REPORT
IN HUNGARY

NOVEMBER 2021



ACTION AND PROTECTION
LEAGUE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A significant part of combating antisemitism is monitoring of the prevalence of antisemitic incidents. One of the aims of the Action and Protection League (APL) is to heighten the awareness of antisemitism in the society. The primary tool in achieving this is continuous professional monitoring of hate crimes in public life. Neither Jewish communities nor individual Jews can be protected unless there is data on antisemitic incidents and other hate crimes and that these are collected and analysed. The data collected by the Action and Protection League, cooperated with Action and Protection Foundation (APF), are published in monthly reports, and a summary of the findings is published for the individual countries/regions in a yearly report. The monitoring report is carried out by the APF.

The reports deal with two forms of behaviour: antisemitic hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents. Both types of behaviour are referred to as "hate incidents" in the reports. The main difference between an antisemitic hate crime and other hate crimes is that the former possesses an antisemitic motive. Due to differences in legislation and application of legislation in various countries, there are different interpretations of which antisemitic incidents that are violations of criminal law. In addition are some hate-motivated acts, albeit troubling for Jews, not considered criminal if they, e.g., are considered belonging to the realm of freedom of speech. The APL considers it essential to record both types of hate incidents in order to gain a general overview and to make it possible to analyse changes over time.

In order to have the most extensive scope possible, the APL uses a variety of sources simultaneously. The incidents are not only recorded, but the characteristics of the individual incident are also analysed. The data recorded includes the incident's location, the perpetrator (if known), victim, and consequences (if any). In addition, are the various types of incidents differentiated in the reports.

Based on its sources, our Foundation found two antisemitic hate incidents throughout its monitoring activities in November. Both of them have been filed as Hate Speech. Besides this, we have identified one Further Hate Incident.

APF did not initiate any legal proceedings this month, nor did we receive

any notifications regarding our previous proceedings.

ACTION AND PROTECTION LEAGUE

In the last decade there has been a rise in antisemitism in Europe. Surveys by e.g. the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)¹ and the ADL Global 100² show a broad spectrum of antisemitism and how it fluctuates over time.

The character of antisemitic incidents is quite different in the monitored countries concerning content, expressions, and perpetrators. Current antisemitism is mainly connected to Islamism, Far-right groups, and Far-left groups. Islamist expressions are most frequent in countries with large Muslim populations in Western Europe and uncommon in Eastern and Central Europe. Far-left expressions of antisemitism can often be found disguised as Anti-Zionism in Western Europe and is often connected to the conflict in the Middle

East. In East and Central Europe, right-wing expressions of prejudice against Jews frequently have old roots, not only among groups related to Fascism and Nazism, but at times also in populist-nationalist settings. In several countries Jews have found themselves under more threat during the last decade. This does not only include physical attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions but is also visible in the growth of conspiracy theories, online hatred, and political campaigns favouring banning of, e.g., brit milah and kashrut.

Countering antisemitism becomes an increasingly urgent issue for Europe. Action and Protection League of Europe (APL) has been established to explore the causes of modern-day antisemitism and to implement effective defense.

¹ EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: ANTISEMITISM - OVERVIEW OF DATA AVAILABLE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION 2008-2018
² <https://global100.adl.org>

ABOUT THE REPORT

The general opinion on, and treatment of, antisemitism often takes extreme forms. On the one hand, some voices try to belittle the importance of such offenses and manifestations. On the other hand, on occasion, one-off incidents are exaggerated in the public arena to such an extent that they give the impression that they are frequent or a regular part of daily life. Knowledge of the actual situation(s) is an indispensable condition for the treatment of real problems. Monitoring of antisemitic hate crimes and incidents³ is one of the tools used in achieving this objective.

From 2019 the Action and Protection League has decided to monitor seven European countries. In the first stage, data is collected from seven countries: Austria, Czechia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Sweden, and more countries will be added later. All countries have their own particularities and vast differences when it comes to the monitoring of antisemitism – in some cases, there are several organisations with similar goals as the APL and in other countries, few or no similar activities. In no case will APL try to replace existing organisations, but rather seek cooperation and exchange of data.

Apart from the monthly reports, an annual summary review, including more detailed analyses on the incidents, is published. All reports are published in English, and almost all are published in the local language.

The fight against hate crimes is of utmost importance since it differs from many other forms of criminal conduct. On one level can these crimes and incidents can be considered as messages. They are not only about the victim in question but points to a larger group. Antisemitism and other hate crimes are thus not only attacks against individuals, but the social fabric of the society as a whole. This does not, of course, diminish the distress and psychological trauma which individual victims might

suffer. These crimes are often not “only” against property or lead to physical threat of individuals, but it also concerns self-dignity. The offenses indicate that the victim is not an equal member or a member at all of the society. Since hate crimes, in general, target victims due to some unchangeable characteristics (real or imagined), the victim becomes almost defenseless. Victims often fear that they may again be targets of similar incidents or worse atrocities if they identify perpetrators to relevant authorities. Inappropriate handling of such incidents may easily lead to secondary victimization where the victim can be led to believe that it was their fault, e.g., by not being careful enough, etc. This type of criminal act also, as mentioned, has an effect on the group as a whole. The victims of these crimes are often interchangeable, since they are not targeted at individuals and any other member could just as well have been targeted. This means that all members of the targeted group become potential victims and might live in fear of a future when they themselves may be the target of a prejudice-motivated crime. This situation is particularly poignant for groups that have been exposed to prejudice for a long time. There is no need to justify at length why Jews belong among such groups. These crimes undermine the fundamental value that all members of a society are of equal value. Inadequate handling of such incidents can have grave consequences for the society as a whole. Not only may it encourage the perpetrators to commit further crimes, but it significantly diminishes the cohesive power of society as a whole⁴.

It is not an exaggeration to state that fewer hate crimes are reported and documented than are committed. The discrepancy between committed crimes and reported crimes vary significantly between different countries is not necessarily connected to the number of Jews. A contributing factor

³ See detailed definitions in the *Methodology* section.

⁴ Levin & McDevitt 1999, 92-93; OSCE/ODIHR 2009a, 19-21; OSCE/ODIHR 2009b, 17-18; Perry 2001, 10).

to the under-reporting is that victims rarely report them to the police or relevant authority. There are several causes for this: many victims are not convinced that the authorities will handle the matter adequately, either because they lack the competence or that they are prejudiced. In addition, many victims are unaware of applicable laws or where to turn for help. Furthermore, some victims are worried that their concealed traits will be exposed and that they might suffer more by reporting incidents. Victims might also fear that authorities will not be able to prove a hate-crime motivation and that reporting is thus useless.

It is civic organizations that can help remedy these problems. These organizations can cooperate with police and relevant authorities, but also an intermediary between victim and authority. Reports by civic organizations can be expedient in alerting official authorities on hate-motivated crimes, and long-term tendencies can be outlined through the use of collected data. Civil organizations can prepare cases for legal process, may provide legal defense for victims, and give other forms of aid and support.

METHODOLOGY

The report deals with two types of offense: hate crimes and hate motivated incidents. These are defined by OSCE as follows⁵ (OSCE/ODIHR 2009b, 15–16):

- hate crime: a crime as defined by the criminal code, which has been motivated by prejudice against a certain group of people⁶
- hate-motivated incident: an offense, also based on prejudice against a specific group of people, but not reaching the level of criminal conduct.

The heightened importance of individual hate crimes is indicated by the fact that the criminal code of numerous countries deals with these cases separately. Although there is a widely accepted definition of antisemitism (see IHRA 2017), there is currently no consistent definition of hate crimes in the countries monitored by the APL.

In addition are the legal consequences different in the monitored countries. This means that an incident which a crime in one country could be legal in another. The obvious example concerns the so-called Holocaust denial, which, e.g., is outlawed in Hungary, but legal in several countries monitored by APL. Since the Action and Protection League has a broad scope when it comes to data collection, everything is covered in the reports, but in some instances, similar acts are filed as a crime in one country and "only" an incident in another. In every case, we follow the definitions in the criminal code of the individual countries. We estimate that this problem will diminish over time due to the adaptation of the same definitions and legislation in the European Union.

Our reports contain detailed descriptions of the definition of hate incidents and our approach to solving the problems. The reports are based on sources taken from international, independent monitoring services, local informants as well as data collected by other organizations working with same or similar issues.

The monthly report presents hate crimes and hate incidents motivated by antisemitism in the broadest possible sense: perpetrator, target, means, or message. The target may be a person, a group, an event, a building, a monument, or other property. It is essential, however, that an antisemitic motivation can be established. This means that the perpetrator chose the given target on the basis that he/she was Jewish or perceived as being Jewish. It is thus not relevant whether the assumption is correct or not: the belief of the target's connection to Jewry is sufficient.

In the course of monitoring, all incidents that fall in the category of hate crime are also considered hate incidents. These may be crimes identified as such by the Criminal Code in the individual country (e.g. violent assault of a member of a community, incitement to hatred of a community, denial of the crimes of the national socialist regime, use of symbols of autocratic regimes etc.), but can also include other acts mentioned in the Criminal Code, if prejudice can be proven as a motivating factor.

When identifying hate incidents, various indicators are recorded during the monitoring period⁷ and are used as the basis for examining whether the given action could have been motivated by antisemitism.

For the broadest possible scope in monitoring antisemitic hate incidents, the simultaneous use of a variety of sources is required. In addition to media monitoring, reports from local informants the Action and Protection League also rely on reports filed by victims. In Hungary, the Action and Protection League has a 24-hours-a-day Hotline that serves to ease the passage of reports. The goal is to supply a similar service for the other countries so reports can be filed in the local languages. It is also possible to file reports anonymously online. Such reports will be of especially great importance to this study. If a victim cannot or does not want to file a report, the APL can use an intermediary to help the victim in the process. Such an intermediary may be a family member, an acquaintance of

5 The scientific definition of hate crimes is extremely contradictory and divergent (for more on this, see Chakrabarti and Garland 2009, 4–7).

These definitions can serve as important addenda to an understanding of these crimes; however, they are difficult to apply in practice. This is what made the creation of simpler, more practical definitions necessary.

6 For example, on these grounds the OSCE does not consider hate speech a hate crime, since the given behaviour would not count as criminal without the motive of prejudice (OSCE/ODIHR 2009a, 24). For our approach in dealing with this, see below.

7 These indicators are described in the Methodology section

the victim, a witness of the incident, or another civil organization.

It is a declared objective of the League to be in close contact with the authorities, since in some countries, they are the first to be approached by victims or witnesses.

A variety of media channels also represent relevant sources: television, radio, as well as the printed and online versions of the press. An essential segment of the report is composed of monitoring the expressions of online hatred as a phenomenon that is continually growing.

The public discourses are monitored by a team of experts. One of our aims is to cover the increasingly large segment of the media with continuous monitoring. Monitoring extends to roughly all receivable TV and radio stations, all the printed press with high print-runs, as well as online material not only on news portals, but the social comment arenas and extreme, hate inciting websites. The monitoring process is carried out systematically, according to precisely prepared standards.

Among the monitored hate incidents, some are considered a part of the statistics, but some are recorded, though not counted as part of the statistics.⁸

The categories for hate incidents that are included in the statistics are as follow:

- The hate incidents have to have occurred in the countries monitored; no matter whether the victim is a citizen of the country or not
- Any action, incident, atrocity that is aimed at Jewish individuals, organizations or property where an antisemitic intent or content can be proven, or if the victim was attacked for being Jewish or due to an assumed Jewish identity
- Deliberate and wanton impairment of any Jewish institution or building (even if no further, antisemitic message was paired with the vandalism [for example, a Jewish synagogue's window is broken with a stone])

- Antisemitic comments that have been reported to Action and Protection League appearing on blogs, forums, community pages and similar.
- Antisemitic and neo-Nazi material delivered to particular Jewish individuals, Jewish organizations, institutions
- Antisemitic and neo-Nazi material deposited at Jewish-owned property, Jewish organizations, institutions or similar
- Criticism related to Israel and Zionism, if they go beyond a political statement and serve to recall traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes
- Moreover, events apt to raise fear among Jews.

Hate incidents that are not accounted for in the statistics⁹ :

- Antisemitic hate incidents that are related to the countries monitored and Jewry in these countries, but for some reason do not belong to the scope of the statistics (e.g., they did not occur in the country in question, antisemitic intent cannot be proven, or the circumstances are unclear)
- Expressions of hate that appear regularly on homepages, in comments and online forums, but have not been reported to Action and Protection League.
- Other news that only indirectly are linked to antisemitism

A number of the aspects of the registered incidents are recorded. The indicators that help decide whether a given incident was motivated by prejudice are mentioned above.

These indicators pertain to various characteristics of the perpetrator, data concerning the victim, the time and location of the incident. These are recorded in the course of collection of data. Tabs are kept on whether incidents had any, and if so, what sort of — possible legal — consequences.

⁸ The following were used to develop these criteria: ADL 2012, CST 2013

⁹ The criteria for hate incidents that are not accounted for in the statistics were modified, therefore the present description is different from the one we used in 2013.

Apart from registering incidents, it is also important to capture the qualitative differentials between them. The typification of cases is carried out in two ways. According to one of the systems of categorization, the following types are differentiated: incitement against members of a community, violence against members of a community, use of symbols of autocratic regimes, and Holocaust denial.

Based on the *Facing Facts! Guidelines*, seven types of incidents are differentiated as follows¹⁰:

- Homicide: any attack on a person that causes loss of life
- Extreme physical violence
 - Any attack on a person that potentially causes serious bodily harm
 - Any attack involving weapons, or other tools that can cause bodily harm
 - Any attack on property, where there is a potential for the people occupying the property to be killed
 - Bombs and letter bombs
 - Kidnapping
- Assault
 - Any physical attack against a person or people, which does not pose a threat to their life and is not serious
 - Attempted assault, which fails due to self-defense, or if the victim runs away
 - Throwing objects at a person or people, including where the object misses its target
- Damage to property
 - Any physical attack directed against property, which is not life-threatening
 - Desecration of property
 - Arson attacks on property where there is not threat to life, failed attempts at arson

- Threats
 - Any clear and specific threat, whether verbal or written
 - Any “bomb” which is assessed to be a hoax
 - Stalking
 - Defamation
- Hate speech
 - Public hate speech
 - Hate speech channeled via the internet and social media
 - Abusive behavior
 - Abusive literature sent to more than one person
 - Hate speech in literature and music
- Discriminatory incidents

Placing hate incidents in context is also a priority. These actions do not exist in empty space and are by no means independent of the social and cultural environment in which they occur. The dynamics of these incidents is also of importance: often the processes, rather than separately occurring events (Perry 2001, 8). Apart from the static data, short descriptions of each event are also published, which leads to a better understanding of the environment surrounding the incidents.¹¹ In presenting timelines, attention will always be given to showing the dynamics of the events.

¹⁰ CEJI 2012, 10–12

¹¹ These descriptions, in particular, are held to be the most positive aspect of the Anti-Defamation League reports by Perry (2001, 16).

ANTISEMITIC HATE INCIDENTS – NOVEMBER 2021

Action and Protection Foundation identified two Antisemitic Hate Incidents over the course of its monitoring activities in the month of November. Both are classified as Hate Speech.

HATE SPEECH

Jobbik politician: The coloured player is only the servant of the white one

Source: vaconline.hu

26 November 2021 It happened back in 2012, Zsolt Fehér, a Jobbik local government representative, posted that he is a politically motivated fan and that football is not important to him. Therefore, instead of the Dutch, he preferred the Danes because they have only Danes on their team – writes vaconline.hu.



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He described the 2012 European Football Championship game between Denmark and the Netherlands as “Aryan vs Liberal” and said that Simon Poulsen, a coloured player, was just a “servant” of white goalkeeper Stephan Andersen.

"This is Hungary, not a Jewish country!" - a woman yelled in Nyugati Square

Source: Action and Protection Foundation

30 November 2021 "Get that fucking Hanukkah the hell out of here, you hear me?! This is Hungary, not a Jewish country!" - an elderly lady on Nyugati Square exclaimed after complaining that they had "dismantled and damaged" the double cross installed by Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (“Our Homeland Movement”) without permission. A video of the incident is available on social media.

FURTHER HATE INCIDENTS

Counterfeit Nazi Lego figures appeared on a Hungarian advertising site

Source: blikk.hu

4 November 2021 Fake Legos depicting Nazi officers and Adolf Hitler are being sold on a Hungarian advertising website for 1,500 HUF, Blikk wrote. The newspaper also found a red star soldier, even though, since 2012, it has been a crime to display totalitarian symbols unless it is for artistic or educational purposes.

A historian, who does not wish their identity to be disclosed, told Blikk that most people see the Nazi dictator in the mini-figure with the imperial eagle, iron cross and moustache, regardless of the inaccuracies of the depiction. The demand for objects of the German Reich between 1933 and 1945 is extremely high everywhere, including in Hungary, he noted.

The historian's words were confirmed by a collector who said that entire war sets were also being sold. It is clear to collectors that these are not real Legos, but they buy them in any event because they are unique. The small figures, mainly made in Beijing, are being purchased by Hungarian sellers on foreign sites for less than what they are offered for here.

Blikk also contacted the Lego Group. The company said that they have nothing to do with these figures; they are committed to inspiring and developing children and would never make such a product. They stated as well that they always take the necessary measures to protect intellectual property rights and consumer rights.

Lawyer Béla Vidákovics Zsolt stressed that it is a crime to counterfeit these figures, regardless of the totalitarian symbols. It is punishable by imprisonment for one to five years if committed on a commercial basis and up to five to ten years in cases of particularly serious property damage.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND RESPONSES

Raoul Wallenberg memorial plaque inaugurated in Józsefváros

Source: mazihsz.hu

4 November 2021 A commemorative plaque was placed on the Kálvin Square building at 2–4 Üllői Road, which served as Raoul Wallenberg's headquarters in the autumn of 1944. The event was attended by Dag Hartelius, Swedish Ambassador to Budapest, who stressed the importance of recognising and acknowledging these historical sites as a reminder of the horrors of the Second World War. The ambassador reminded people that a tragedy took place on these streets not so long ago. It is not enough to remember this, he said; people must also act against antisemitism, racism, hatred and exclusion, which are unfortunately still present in today's world.

The event was opened by Dr József Sebes, President of the Raoul Wallenberg Association. In addition to the Swedish ambassador, Holocaust survivor Kate Watz and Dr Gábor Eröss, Deputy Mayor of Józsefváros, also spoke.

Education could be the key to limiting antisemitism

Source: tev.hu

8 November 2021 In addition to leaders of religious and secular Jewish communities, several key players in European politics took part in an international conference of the European Jewish Association (EJA) and the European Action and Protection League (APL) in Krakow. Following the worrying results of APL's recent research on antisemitism in Europe, the event focused on using proper educational instruments to combat prejudice. According to EU officials, the Hungarian model of analysing school textbooks with regard to how they present Judaism, Israel and the Holocaust is remarkable, and its local adaptation is already under discussion with the education ministries of several countries, reports tev.hu.

At the conference, Kálmán Szalai, APL secretary, identified education as essential for reducing antisemitic prejudice. Mr Szalai presented the school textbook review project carried out by his organisation, in which experts from Hungarian Jewish communities were involved in examining the content of textbooks on Jewish religion, culture, ancient and modern Israel and the Holocaust; they then made recommendations to editors and publishers on changes they considered necessary.

Tamir Wertzberger, head of APL's Brussels office, said that government agencies responsible for education in several EU member states had been contacted to adapt the project locally. The European Commissioner for Education is also discussing the possibility of extending it throughout Europe. Work is already underway in Poland and Slovakia on a local "white paper".

In Western European countries, the perpetrators of antisemitic physical attacks are mainly from local Muslim communities. Among migrants from the Middle East, countering prejudice against Jews within the national public education system is particularly important for their integration; they are typically exposed to harmful influences within their communities, and there are few options beyond formal education that can counter these prejudices. In the coming months, the organisation's Brussels office will raise awareness of the importance of this issue in European countries with significant Jewish communities. (e.g., Germany, France and Belgium.)

Dr Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Education, stressed that the new textbooks will be written in cooperation with APL experts to ensure that the content concerning the Jewish community conveys a genuine and authentic image of Judaism to the next generation.



Source: tev.hu

Anti-Jewish sentiment in Hungary rivals that of Muslims in Western Europe

Source: telex.hu, atv.hu

14 November 2021 Nearly half of Hungarian society does not really like Jews, and Hungary has the third-highest level of antisemitism among 16 European countries, telex.hu reports on the international research initiated by Action and Protection Foundation, which is "unprecedented" in its kind. According to the data, antisemitism is more significant on the right, but a third to a quarter of opposition voters are also prejudiced. We reported on the results of the research in our October report.

The Telex article quotes the study summarising the research, authored by András Kovács and György Fischer. They write that nearly half (42%) of the Hungarian population has strong or moderate prejudices against Jews, 24% of Hungarian society is strongly antisemitic, and 18% is moderately antisemitic, all of which is in line with previous trends. What is new this time is that the study also measured latent prejudice.

It is an essential finding that many people reject the acceptance of historical responsibility for the persecution of Jews and accuse Jews of abusing the memory of the Holocaust, not because they are antisemitic but because it offends their national pride that the community to which they belong is guilty of historical crimes. They feel that acknowledging responsibility threatens their pride surrounding their national identity.

In a European comparison, Hungary has the third-highest level of antisemitic prejudice. Of the 16 countries surveyed, Greek antisemitism is the most prominent, followed by former socialist countries. Among the 16 countries surveyed, only Greeks and Poles had higher rates of anti-Jewish prejudice than Hungarians, while Slovakia and Romania had almost similar rates.

Kálmán Szalai, Secretary of the Action and Protection Foundation (APF), told ATV that according to APF's antisemitic prejudice survey covering 16 European countries, 41.2% of Hungarian society is characterised by Jewish prejudice. In addition, 20% of Hungarians fully agreed with the suggestion that Jews were trying to take advantage of the Holocaust. The survey measures not only primary but also secondary antisemitism, which measures attitudes and knowledge about the Holocaust and attitudes towards modern Israel. The complexity of the problem is illustrated by the fact that where there is a high level of prejudice, there is also a low level of antisemitic hate incidents and vice versa; therefore, it is not possible to make a general judgement on the state of antisemitism based on one indicator.

There will always be conspiracy theories and extremists, but the survey clearly shows that from East to West, the rate of antisemitic prejudice is decreasing. However, the number of hate crimes is also growing exponentially. So the level of antisemitism does not directly indicate if Jewish communities in a country are under threat, Szalai concluded.

The House of Fates museum could open its doors to the public in 2024

Source: neokohn.hu, 168.hu

17 November 2021 The European correspondent for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) recalls the history of the House of Fates in a comprehensive article, full of controversies and conflicts that go back almost 10 years, and points out that the relationship to the Holocaust still strongly divides Hungarian society, neokohn.hu reports.

In 2018, the government handed over control of the museum to EMIH, the Association of Hungarian Jewish Communities. EMIH head Rabbi Shlomo Köves told JTA in August that the Mária Schmidt-Mazsihisz

conflict, which had complicated the work until then, was over, as Schmidt is no longer involved in the museum project, which will also be renamed. EMIH has named the museum *Etz Hayimra*, Hebrew for "Tree of Life".

Köves said they are working on content that presents the tragedy of the Holocaust in Hungary authentically and inspires hope for the future. Köves has recruited an international team of respected historians to the museum's management committee. The team includes Yitzhak Mais, former director of Yad Vashem; Esther Farbstein, a specialist in Holocaust studies; and David Marwell, former director of the Jewish Heritage Museum in New York.

"The history of the House of Fates museum emphasises that the legacy of the Holocaust prevents Jews from being fully integrated into Hungarian society. It also illustrates how Hungarian Jews themselves are deeply divided over how to commemorate the Holocaust", writes the JTA correspondent, who says the controversial museum is still on track to open in 2024. The report also features Hungarian Holocaust researchers who have criticised and supported the project.

According to László Karsai, the House of Fates is greeted with suspicion abroad and in Hungary. According to János Pelle, the museum was caught up in the political battles between the left and right in Hungary even before it was set up. So the fight over it is not academic but political, said Pelle, who is involved in writing some part of the content of the new concept.

JTA says the project is not a simple task. The document, obtained exclusively by JTA, contains some inconvenient truths for Hungarian ultra-nationalists, who often believe that the persecution of the country's Jews began with the arrival of the exclusively German army in 1944.

When contacted by Neokohn, Shlomo Köves, the chief rabbi of the EMIH, said that neither he nor the team he led had encoun-

tered any government obstacles in planning the project. The Hungarian government contributed nearly HUF 200 million to the planning, preparation and concept development, while the EMIH community contributed a further HUF 300 million from its own budget.

The name "Etz Hayim", "Tree of Life", refers to the ancient Jewish symbol of universal values that can never be overcome and represents the unique and continuous Hungarian-Jewish coexistence. The new concept has been submitted to several renowned Holocaust historians and museum experts. Their critical comments are currently being processed. It is hoped that the general public will be able to see the concept "early next year", Köves said.

The Jewish cemetery in Debrecen can be visited virtually

Source: szombat.org, akibic.hu

22 November 2021 The Órváros Public Foundation, the Quality of Life Foundation (Életminőség Alapítvány) and the Jewish Community of Debrecen have created a website and mobile application about the Jewish cemetery of Debrecen, MTI wrote.

István Puskás, Debrecen's deputy mayor for culture, assessed the development of the unified, professionally verified cemetery database and the publication of geographic information technology as a new stage in cultural innovation, as well as cooperation between denominations and the city regarding memorial policy.

Tamás Horovitz, president of the Jewish Community of Debrecen, said that cemeteries play an important role in the Jewish religion and in the life of Jewish people. The Debrecen Jewish cemetery is also a pilgrimage site, which can now be visited from anywhere in the world by downloading the app.

János Mazsu, the professional head of the programme, added: The geo-database is the result of six to seven years of work and is now available on the internet.

After downloading the application, you can search for names, but you can also take a virtual tour of the Monostorpályi Road Cemetery. The expert recalled that Jews were given permission to settle in Debrecen in 1840 and were buried in the cemetery for the first time in 1841.

Eight thousand graves were identified during the excavation work, including the data of those buried in them. There are about 300 graves in the cemetery that are now so damaged that identification is not possible or could only be achieved by extensive research using a different approach, he added.

The application can search for rabbis buried in the cemetery, for former prominent Jewish members of Debrecen's public life, for Jewish soldiers who died heroically in various wars and for victims of the Holocaust, said János Mazsu.

The unique search system was presented at the press conference by cemetery and local history expert József Papp.

Shlomo Köves: Hungary is the only member state where the sense of security of Jews has improved

Source: mandiner.hu

28 November 2021 A kind of dictatorship of opinion is perceptible, trying to make it impossible to live out centuries-old, millennia-old traditions and religious values, said the Chief Rabbi of EMIH, speaking to Mandiner in an interview on Hanukkah. In Hungary, a Jewish man who embraces his religion through his dress is hardly even looked at on the street, which was almost unthinkable decades ago and still is in some parts of the EU today. EMIH has played an essential role in this process by organising candle-lighting ceremonies in public places and inviting public figures. Shlomo Köves also spoke about what they discovered via the European prejudice research of the Action and Protection Foundation (APF).

"Candle-lighting has become a natural part not only of Budapest's cityscape but also of the festive season and is now taken into account by the majority of society. In terms of the public experience of Jewish identity, this is perhaps one of the greatest successes of the last 30 years. It is important for us that Jewish identity is lived not only through a sense of community of destiny but also through positive community experiences and religion", Köves said. He added that if a Jew does not respect their traditions, it is harder to expect the same of those around them. This is why it is important not to try to hide our values and traditions, and in Hungary, the public faith experience of Hanukkah has a considerable role to play in this.

The rabbi said that the headline of the Tel-ex report - "Hungary ranks top in antisemitism, anti-Jewishness in Hungary rivals that of Western European Muslims" - on the APF public opinion survey was misleading. Köves said that highlighting this does not faithfully reflect the key findings of the otherwise disruptive survey, and the claim in the catchy title is not well-founded.

"Comparing the prejudice of Muslims in Western Europe with the prejudice of Hungarian society as a whole is fundamentally unprofessional because there is no official registration of the religion of citizens in European countries. So the picture of Muslims who identified themselves as Muslims in the survey in question cannot be considered representative of Muslims in Western Europe. Not to mention that extremist Muslims, who pose a real security challenge to the Jewish community, are unlikely to participate in such a survey. It is also remarkable that Hungary is the only EU member state where the Jewish community's perception of security has improved over the last 10 years while ranking in the top five or six in terms of widespread prejudice", Köves said.

The issue of antisemitism should be approached first and foremost from the point of view of the security of Jewish communities. And taking an element of complex research on a sensitive issue out of context and using it as a clickbait, let alone a political weapon, is particularly damaging.

According to the rabbi, this comprehensive European research was also crucial to determine, country by country, the means to be used to combat antisemitism. Where antisemitism is a security-political problem, other means are needed than where it is more at the level of opinion.

Shlomo Köves stressed that of all the countries with a significant Jewish community, Hungary has by far the lowest incidence rate of antisemitic atrocities year after year. Nevertheless, it is no small problem that 35–40% of society identifies with some level of antisemitic views in Hungary. Eradicating antisemitic prejudice is a generational project that requires long-term planning, and it is gratifying that the current government has embarked on a strategy to address this issue.

In cooperation with the APF, the Hungarian government has long been dealing with the problem and has introduced the prohibition of Holocaust denial into the Constitution and the Criminal Code, thus making it a part of judicial practice in Hungary. It has also involved Jewish organisations in the thematic revision of school textbooks and has already made relevant changes to the National Curriculum.

Speaking about the message of Hanukkah, Köves said that our communal and religious values often have to be fought for, even against the mainstream. According to Jewish wise men, the real time to take up arms is when they want to take away your faith, your soul. This is a valid message regardless of Jewishness. Today, of course, the situation is different from that of antiquity. Still, a certain dictatorship of opinion tries to make it impossible to live out centuries-old traditions and religious values. This is a severe

challenge, and the celebration of Hanukkah is a call to stand up and hold on to our values.

The eight-day Jewish festival has begun

Source: pestihirlap.hu

29 November 2021 The first Hanukkah candle was lit on Sunday. "Dear friends! Happy, light-filled holiday!" - Köves Shlomo, Chief Rabbi of EMIH, the Association of Hungarian Jewish Communities, began his speech at Nyugati Square. "Every community, including the Jewish community, must ask itself: What is the greatest threat that must be confronted? According to the rabbi, at first glance, it may seem that the Jewish community is facing two types of danger: an external one, antisemitism, and an internal one, assimilation, the abandonment of internal values. But there is also a third factor, which is even more dangerous than these, which is disinterest. Apathy is at the root of both antisemitism and the abandonment of inherent values. More than 2,000 years ago, the Jews were saved by the fact that, although they were few in number, they took their destiny into their own hands; they wanted to make a difference, they saw that by taking action they could achieve a great deal.

Köves also recalled the difficulties caused by the epidemic. He said that we are not only experiencing a health crisis, but also a spiritual crisis, which affects everyone equally, regardless of religion or colour. "Over the past year and a half, many of us have felt that nothing makes any difference. We can't do anything about it anyway. But there have been some who have acted. And tonight, as we light the Hanukkah candles, we also say thank you to the doctors, nurses, teachers, mothers and fathers who are trying to do something and make a difference. The struggle of the Maccabees is our struggle. Let us not let ourselves slip into apathy and idleness. Let us do something for ourselves and for our environment, for the Jewish community as Jews", he said.

He added that the eight-day holiday has another important message. "It's important to have a little darkness to show that we need to see the light. We need to light the flame and see how much good surrounds us in spite of all the adversity and difficulties. We have our family, our husband, our wife, our mother, our father, our children and the

community we live in. All that God gives us. Let us know and learn to appreciate them. God willing, there will be no more adversity in our lives. This is my wish for you on the first day of Hanukkah from Nyugati Square. May we never have to deal with any darkness. May we be able to show our own flame and know the many good things in our lives."

OFFICIAL NEWS AND CIVIL RESPONSES

Israel's Embassy in Budapest: FTC has proven that racism must be fought not by words but by deeds

Source: szombat.org

19 November 2021 The president of the Ferencváros Torna Club (FTC, Fradi), Gábor Kubatov, recently paid an official visit to Israel. He discussed the steps taken by Fradi in its fight against exclusion and also announced that they would like to transfer a top Israeli football player to the club, mazsihisz.hu wrote.

Gábor Kubatov's visit to Israel was reported by the Jewish State Embassy in Budapest on its Facebook page. The FTC has proven that racism must be fought not by words but by deeds, as Kubatov explained the club's strict measures to end football fans' discriminatory, racist and antisemitic behaviour.

Kubatov also visited the Yad Vashem Institute, where he held constructive discussions on the nomination of the club's former legendary coach, the humanitarian activist István Tóth Potya, for the honorific title of Righteous Among the Nations. The FTC president announced that the club wants to strengthen its relations with Israel further and plans to transfer a top Israeli football player to Fradi.

The sports director also gave an interview to the Israel Hayom national daily. He said the essential thing in the combat against antisemitism and violence was "honesty and integrity. It wasn't a case of proclaiming something outwardly while waving to the fans that everything could go on as before. I meant what I said, and I stuck to it all the time".

He recalled that a decade ago, it was commonplace to sing songs like "the train to Auschwitz is leaving" or to mock coloured players as monkeys. At first, he tried to convince the ultras with pleasant words but took action when it became clear that this was not working. Kubatov was then personally harassed. His children were even threatened and there were protests outside his home after the most violent fans were refused entry to the new stadium.

"I meant what I said, and I stuck to it all the time. That's what I would advise any club facing similar problems. In the end, we won, but we are not at the end of the process, and we have to be constantly vigilant", said Kubatov.

Péter Márki-Zay wholeheartedly recommends Jobbik to Jewish voters

Source: index.hu

24 November 2021 The opposition's prime ministerial candidate was interviewed on BBC's HARDtalk and said that he is definitely in favour of same-sex marriage. According to Index's review, this is not contrary to his beliefs because civil marriage is a civil act. Péter Márki-Zay described himself as a federalist and said he wanted closer EU cooperation, including a "European FBI". Among other electoral promises, the most interesting was his statement that he would wholeheartedly recommend voters of Jewish origin to vote for Jobbik candidates, despite the party's previous antisemitic statements.

On several occasions, Jobbik politicians have expressed their antisemitic and racist views. Lajos Rig had previously posted

an article claiming that Gypsies were being used as a biological weapon by Jews. György Szilágyi considers the Simon Wiesenthal Institute a "national security risk". At the same time, Gábor Pál has previously also stood up for Márton Gyöngyösi, who said during a speech in parliament that "it was time to compile a list of Hungarian Jews", as they pose "a national risk". Gábor has also not found that László Csatáry, who has been accused of war crimes in Hungary and Slovakia, guilty and called Israel an aggressor.

On his Facebook page, László Bíró called the capital of Budapest "Judapest" and mocked the traditional hairstyles of visiting Orthodox tourists. At the same time, Gergely Kalló expressed his support for the neo-Nazi Betyársereg. Despite these statements, the left-wing opposition parties supported these politicians in the opposition primaries.

NEWS AND OPINIONS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM IN HUNGARY

Der Standard: Racism is still largely present in Hungary

Source: mandiner.hu

4 November 2021 "The claim that racism is completely unknown in Hungary is not true; in fact, racism and xenophobia are still largely present in Hungary today", explains Der Standard's commentary, written by Rudolf Paksa and Róbert Balogh. The article was reviewed by mandiner.hu.

According to the authors, racism is present in Hungary differently and for different reasons than in Western European countries. Hungary had no direct experience with colonialism. Although the ideas of the

time reached Hungary, the country did not become colonial. The authors conclude that Hungarians also came from the East, which would not have given the Hungarians a privileged place in the "racial hierarchy".

"The Hungarian far-right, for example, did not justify the exclusion of Jews by claiming that they were 'inferior', but simply argued that mixing people of different races was harmful. The rejection of the kneeling gesture is supported by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, as it fits in with his rejection of the decadence of the West and his preference for Eastern illiberal regimes as models to follow." The article also explains why Hungarian players do not kneel before matches.

OTHER NEWS

Momentum politician wants to remove the name of the Arrow Cross Party member, who collected the fortunes of deported Jews, from the Diana Park monument

Source: 168.hu

3 November 2021 Another World War memorial has been found with the names of members of the Arrow Cross Party. The man in question was Gábor Szédelyi, who managed the restaurant at 2 Diana Street. The property of Jews looted by local Arrow Cross members before their deportation was stored here, and officers from the Gestapo nearby also frequented the restaurant, 168.hu reports.

Nevertheless, his name is on a monument in the park next to the Saint Ladislaus Parish on Diana Street, a memorial to the heroes and victims of the First and Second World

Wars in the district. Another member of the Arrow Cross Party, József Adamek, also appears on the list. This was pointed out by Gábor Vadász, a Momentum politician who took the initiative to remove the two names.

Vadász recalled that the Turul memorial to the victims of the Second World War also included members of the Arrow Cross Party who took part in the mass torture and murder of Jews. That is why the names of four Arrow Cross members were removed in 2020, and in September this year, the municipal council voted to exclude the names of 17 more Arrow Cross Party members from the new monument to be placed in Városmajor. However, the Diana Park memorial was forgotten, and two Arrow Cross Party members whose names have already been removed from the Turul list are still listed there.

THE MONTH'S CHRONICLE

All the incidents to be found in the report are presented chronologically in the table below. The *Category* column shows which part of the report deals with the given case in greater detail.

No.	Date	Incident	Category
1.	3rd of November	Momentum politician wants to remove the name of the Arrow Cross Party member, who collected the fortunes of deported Jews, from the Diana Park monument	Other News
2.	4th of November	Counterfeit Nazi Lego figures appeared on a Hungarian advertising site	Further Hate Incidents
3.	4th of November	Raoul Wallenberg memorial plaque inaugurated in Józsefváros	Community News and Responses
4.	4th of November	Der Standard: Racism is still largely present in Hungary	News and Opinions about Antisemitism in Hungary
5.	8th of November	Education could be the key to limiting antisemitism	Community News and Responses
6.	14th of November	Anti-Jewish sentiment in Hungary rivals that of Muslims in Western Europe	Community News and Responses
7.	17th of November	The House of Fates museum could open its doors to the public in 2024	Community News and Responses
8.	19th of November	Israel's Embassy in Budapest: FTC has proven that racism must be fought not by words but by deeds	Official News and Civil Responses
9.	22nd of November	The Jewish cemetery in Debrecen can be visited virtually	Community News and Responses
10.	26th of November	Jobbik politician: The coloured player is only the servant of the white one	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Hate Speech
11.	30th of November	"This is Hungary, not a Jewish country!" - a woman yelled in Nyugati Square	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Hate Speech

CONTACT AND SUPPORT

Action and Protection League is the civil initiative of a number of Jewish organizations that is ready to take resolute steps to curb increasing widespread antisemitic manifestations.

The Action and Protection Foundation is the partner of the Action and Protection League in Hungary.

In case anyone faces insults or antisemitic abuse due to a supposed or real Jewish background, do not remain silent, let us know, so that we can forward the case through the appropriate channels to the official organs required to take measures!

Notifications of such incidents are received by the Foundation through any of the following means:

HOTLINE (+36 1) 5 1 00 000

The website of Action and Protection League: www.apleu.org

The Facebook page: www.facebook.com/tev-tett-es-vedelem-alapitvany

Action and Protection League's undertaking can only be successful if great numbers share in our commitment to prepare the grounds for the right to fair process for all those who have suffered offenses. In aid of this cause please support the work of the Foundation with your contribution! Donations can be made to the Foundation on the following bank account:

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