

ANTISEMITIC HATE CRIMES
AND INCIDENTS REPORT
IN HUNGARY

DECEMBER 2020

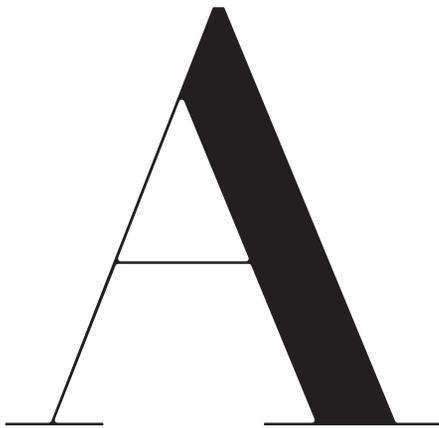


ACTION AND PROTECTION
LEAGUE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Action and Protection League	4
About the Report	5
Methodology	7
Antisemitic Hate Incidents – December 2020	10
Vandalism	10
Threat	11
Further Hate Incidents	12
Community News and Responses	12
News and Opinions about Antisemitism in Hungary	13
Other News	15
Action and Protection Foundation Legal Actions	19
The Month's Chronicle	20
Contact and Support	21
References	21
Contributors and Publisher Information	22

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.

Action and Protection Foundation (APF) identified two incidents of antisemitic hate crime this month. One incident is classified as vandalism, the other is categorised as a threat. The vandalism entailed

desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Tállya, whereas in the latter case, Jews were threatened via letters in Nagykálló.

The section entitled Further Hate Incidents presents no case this month. This section includes incidents that are classified as hate-motivated incidents but are

not included in our most recent statistics due to their insignificant nature or lack of clear antisemitic motive or because the time of the incident is unknown.

APF did not initiate any legal proceedings this month, nor were we notified of any ongoing cases.

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 – DECEMBER 2020

Action and Protection Foundation identified two antisemitic hate crimes over the course of its monitoring activities in the month of December. The incidents are classified as vandalism and a threat.

VANDALISM

Vandalism and desecration in Jewish cemetery of Tállya

Source: akibic.hu, tev.hu, neokohn.hu

9-14 December 2020 Christian volunteers organised a clean-up in the cemetery during the Jewish New Year, and on Saturday, they even lit a large fire – reported Kibic.hu.

In 2020, a group of mainly Christian volunteers travelled to Tállya several times to clean up the neglected Jewish cemetery. The case was first covered on magyarkurir.hu, as the organiser of the clean-up, Bence Illyés, gave an interview to the portal. Illyés talked about how much it is needed in Hungary today for Christians to restore Jewish cemeteries out of a sense of social responsibility because many graves are in such poor condition due to the Holocaust. “One of the most beautiful and noble forms of volunteering is when I contribute to a cause that I have no direct links to at all, and I cannot expect anything from anyone in return”, said Illyés about their activities.



Bence Illyés - source: akibic.hu

It is strange, however, that the first occasion of the clean-up coincided with the Jewish New Year. In July 2020, Illyés contacted the chairman of the Jewish Heritage Public

Foundation of Hungary (Mazsök), György

Szabó, and requested financial support for the project. Szabó assured Illyés he would receive funds for his plans. After reading the papers, however, György Szabó noticed that the volunteers planned to clean up the cemetery in Tállya on the Jewish New Year.

“I immediately notified Bence Illyés about the problem and asked him to change the date, and he firmly rejected the idea. He said he could not rearrange the time with the volunteers”, Szabó told Kibic. “Illyés and his group damaged the graves and desecrated the memory of the deceased. I do not understand why someone who researches Judaism and who studied at the Budapest University of Jewish Studies (OR-ZSE) himself would do such a thing”, continued Szabó. He also filed a complaint in relation to the case.

Later, Illyés reacted to the accusation of vandalism in a letter published on Neokohn.hu. In his opinion, “No damage was done to the cemetery; neither the graves nor the general condition of the cemetery were damaged. On the contrary, with a financial expenditure of almost two million forints, the cemetery, which had been abandoned for decades, is now renovated and is again open to visitors, as you can see from the videos and pictures attached. I would like to hereby apologise to those who feel sensitive about the execution and the date



Source: akibic.hu

of the project or feel offended in any other way in relation to the Tállya project. The voluntary project to preserve the cemetery was initiated and implemented with the best of intentions”.

Illyés also said it was not true that they worked in the cemetery on Saturday.

Chairman of Mazsök György Szabó reacted to this as follows:

“When it is about conserving the cemetery, choosing a time that does not fall on a Saturday or coincide with a holiday should be a primary consideration. Beyond religious Jewish acquaintances, there are well-known religious authorities, like Executive Rabbi Báruch Oberlander, who could have been contacted and asked about this. The work in the cemetery was not so urgent that it had to be done on the day of the Jewish New Year.”

THREAT

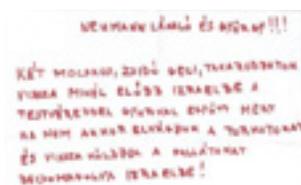
Jews threatened by mail in Nagykálló

Source: tev.hu

1 December 2020 At the end of November 2020, two brothers from Nagykálló notified us that they continuously receive threatening letters in their post box.

The letters contain life-threatening messages due to their Jewish origin. They were asked on numerous occasions to move back to Israel or their throats would be cut and their bodies would be wrapped up and sent back to Israel.

Following the notification, APF immediately started to investigate the case.



Source: tev.hu

FURTHER HATE INCIDENTS

The section entitled Further Hate Incidents presents no cases this month. This section includes incidents that are classified as hate crimes but not included in our most recent statistics due to their insignificant nature or lack of clear antisemitic motive or because the time of the incident is unknown.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND RESPONSES

Kálmán Szalai: Demeter definitely crossed a line

Source: nepszava.hu, neokohn.hu, tev.hu

1 December 2020 As is known from our previous monthly report, Ministerial Commissioner and Director of the Petöfi Museum of Literature (PIM) Szilárd Demeter published an article on Origo.hu causing great protest. In his piece, Demeter said that “Europe is George Soros’ gas chamber”, called George Soros “the liberal Führer” and said that “his Liberaryan army is worshipping him in an even more servile manner than Hitler’s worshipped him back in the day”. According to Demeter, “the Liberaryans are now aiming to exclude Poles and Hungarians from the one last political community where we still have rights. We are the new Jews”.

Szilárd Demeter’s op-ed was condemned by many, including Executive Rabbi of the Association of Hungarian Jewish Communities (EMIH) and founder of APF Shlomo Köves, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (Mazsihisz), the Israeli and the U.S. Embassies in Hungary, and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in Central Europe.

Following the publication of the op-ed, Demeter stood by his statement in several public posts, but after a day, he decided to revoke his piece and delete his Facebook page.

Népszava interviewed APF Secretary Kálmán Szalai about the case. Szalai said that according to APF’s lawyers, although



Szilárd Demeter wrote about the Holocaust in an intolerable manner, the criminal legislation in force in Hungary cannot regulate it because Demeter did not deny the Holocaust nor did he question it, so there would be no legal basis for filing a complaint.

Szalai also said that this case shows us that independently from legal instruments, it is our and especially public figures’ and opinion formers’ moral responsibility to not legitimise antisemitic attitudes. In the last few years, unfortunately, both the left and the right wings have outrageously crossed the line.

In response to a question from Neokohn, Szalai confirmed that it is difficult to take legal action against Demeter’s op-ed.

“It is not the first time that a politician or a public figure has crossed the line. When the mayor of Budapest’s District 11, Imre László, said that Adolf Hitler was deservedly named “man of the year”, or when László Bíró incited vile and antisemitic hatred, neither of them were indictable, but it is generally agreed that they made intolerable statements.”

The APF secretary added: “Having fellowship with those who make antisemitic statements is a serious moral responsibility because a number of such statements have had no consequences lately.” Szalai also explained what aspects should be taken into

consideration: “Action and Protection Foundation always examines whether there is an antisemitic motive behind such statements or they are simply the results of ignorance and irresponsibility.”

NEWS AND OPINIONS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM IN HUNGARY

Hungary: Orbán's problem of antisemitism
Source: hirklikk.hu, dw.com/de

21 December 2020 The German state-owned international broadcaster Deutsche Welle published in an article that Jews live in greater safety in Hungary than in Germany or France, but the government flirts with antisemites and uses antisemitic rhetoric and Jewish organizations are worried. The article stated that there has been more and more news about Nazi comparisons made in Hungary lately, but what Szilárd Demeter wrote on Origo is a new low.

The German broadcaster presented Demeter's op-ed and the following outcry in both Hungary and abroad. DW wrote: “Demeter apologised half-heartedly and retracted his article. However, he kept his job. (...) Because of such incidents, the government is regularly accused of antisemitism, but it is always quick to refute this. The Hungarian government says that Jews in Hungary are safer and freer than in Western Europe. The prime minister has recently written: Open threats and attacks on Jewish people, the likes of which happen today in Germany, are unimaginable in Hungary.”

It is true that compared to France or Germany, there are relatively few documented cases of violence against Jews or Jewish institutions in Hungary. According to a 2018 study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Jews in Hungary felt safer than in other EU countries. “Only 13% worried about becoming the victim of an anti-Semitic physical attack. By comparison, 58% of Jews in France feared this and 47% of those living in Germany.”

“This government is not antisemitic” – claimed András Kovács, professor of Jewish Studies at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest in an interview with DW.

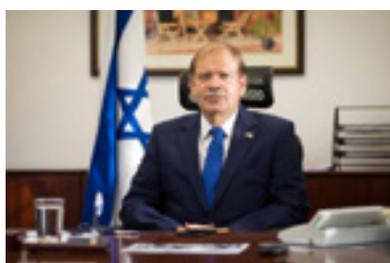
However, Kovács agreed that the government courts public figures who make antisemitic statements. Out of such figures, the article mentioned Ern Raffay and Zsolt Bayer and gave a detailed report on their utterances.

DW also pointed out that antisemitism is also found in the opposition, and they wrote about when the opposition put forward László Bíró from Jobbik as its joint candidate. The article mentioned that a few years ago, Bíró published antisemitic comments on his Facebook page. It further stated that Bíró had apologised numerous times, but the credibility of the opposition alliance still suffered.

Israeli Ambassador: Jews can safely walk the streets of Hungary

Source: magyarnemzet.hu

22 December 2020 Israeli Ambassador to Budapest Yacov Hadas-Handelsman gave an interview to Magyar Nemzet about the antisemitic scandals in Hungary of recent weeks.



Israeli Ambassador Yacov Hadas-Handelsman - Photo: Embassy of the State of Israel, Hungary

First, he was asked about the statements made by the mayor of Ferencváros (Budapest's District 9), Krisztina Baranyi.

“Yes, I have heard, but I do not want to waste a lot of words on this so that such expressions do not receive unnecessary publicity. It is very simple, this wording has no place in public discourse in the 21st century – especially in Europe, of course not in Hungary either – especially when we are talking about a public actor who needs to set a positive example in this regard. In a civilised debate, no matter how heated, such words shall not be used! Not against Jews or anyone else. It is shameful when such things happen, especially for the society where it occurs”, stated the Israeli Ambassador.

Then, the journalist asked a question about the controversial op-ed of Director of the Petőfi Museum of Literature Szilárd Demeter, in which George Soros was called a Führer and Europe was said to be similar to gas chambers. “The Embassy only

submitted a short statement in relation to the article, which has since been revoked”, noted the journalist.

“Yes, our statement warned against relativizing the Holocaust. The Holocaust is incomparable. We shall not overuse the term! We shall not forget what it means! Otherwise, we will find ourselves using this word even when our team loses an important football match. We may have debates on a number of issues, but we shall leave the Holocaust out of it! It was the most heinous crime in the history of mankind, and we hope it will never happen again. Fortunately, Szilárd Demeter eventually understood this and has since removed his article”, responded Yacov Hadas-Handelsman.

“German Social Democrat Minister of State Michael Roth alleged that antisemitism is rising in Hungary. Have you experienced the same?” the journalist asked.

“I like to base my opinion on facts. So let me present to you two facts. First of all, in a list of antisemitic attacks from the Jewish organization Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Hungary ranked last among European countries. There has been a total of roughly 30 incidents in the country this year. Of course, even a single case is one too many, but it does matter out of how many. Secondly, I have been serving for one year in Hungary, and I have been all around the country. I know Europe rather well, therefore, I can confirm that Hungary is practically the only country in Europe where a practising religious Jew can walk around freely without having to be afraid of anything”, said the ambassador.

OTHER NEWS

Antisemitic scandal surrounding Index journalist's former newspaper

Source: drot.info, mandiner.hu

8 December 2020 A current journalist at Index, Tamás Nótin, has a background in media for Jobbik, wrote internet portal Drót.info.

Tamás Nótin used to work at Jobbik portals Barikád and Alfahír. As a member of Barikád's editorial board, for example, he was involved in the radical weekly newspaper's greatest anti-Jewish scandal. Nótin also served previously as Jobbik's local representative in Rákosmente.



Tamás Nótin - source: mandiner.hu

However, he did not start his Jobbik media career at Alfahír. He started out as a member of the editorial board at the weekly Barikád, which was launched in 2009. This paper played a significant role in conveying Jobbik's radical, anti-Roma messages that incited hatred. In 2009, Barikád caused national outrage when its cover depicted the statue of Gerard of Csanád in Budapest photographed from behind and holding the traditional Jewish symbol, a menorah. It was accompanied by the text: "Wake up Budapest! Is this what you want?" Titles of the articles in the issue made it clear what Barikád's wake-up call was actually about:

- Pillaging in "Judapest"
- Sukoró is only the tip of the iceberg – Israeli intrusion in Hungary's property market
- The fight against colonisers – László Grespik on the liberal bar association and the Israeli buy-in

"It is difficult to be interpreted other than as antisemitic incitement", Index wrote about the cover at the time. Tamás Nótin, who remained a member of the editorial board at Barikád despite the scandals, now works at Index.

No place for antisemitic topoi in public discourse

Source: tenyek.hu, hirtv.hu, hirado.hu, 24.hu, neokohn.hu, tev.hu

14-15 December 2020 Based on an audio recording acquired by Tények.hu, mayor of Ferencváros (Budapest's District 9) said the following at a municipal meeting held online: "That's right, so let's make a decision now. We won't sell the land, we won't have any money for it, but that bloody bastard Jewish investor cannot have more than 1,200 square meters. Right?"

The conflict is about a vacant lot owned by the municipality. The council decided to sell the lot at the beginning of the

year. It was the competent municipal committee that had announced the tender, and they decided on the minimum sale price, too.

Later, there was a debate about the lot at a committee meeting. Under the current law, it may only be bought by the owner of the neighbouring lot, who made a decent offer, higher than the minimum sale price. But many councillors had doubts about selling the lot. Andrea Jancsó from Momentum and local representatives of Jobbik, who are also members of the faction called Új Pólus, thought the bid was too low in the current market conditions.



Krisztina Baranyi - source: tev.hu

Krisztina Baranyi published the following post on her Facebook page:

“I did not call the entrepreneur in question a Jew; on the contrary, I was confronting my colleagues about their possible antisemitism. ‘We won’t sell the land, we won’t have any money for it, but that bloody bastard Jewish investor cannot have more than 1,200 square meters. Right?’ This sentence was said at the end of an hour-long online discussion where certain representatives argued against selling a small municipal lot. At this point, they had no other arguments but the one I provokingly refer to in my question: Is it the ethnicity of the investor they have a problem with?” Baranyi also mentioned she would initiate legal proceedings against the medium spreading lies.

Action and Protection Foundation issued a statement about the incident:

“We were concerned to hear that the antisemitic card was played in a discussion about a property sale in Budapest’s District 9. We find it sad and harmful that Jewry, along with repulsive stereotypes and negative characteristics, has recently been more and more frequently used as a trump card in political and economic debates. We find it problematic that responsible public figures allow such inconsiderate associations, regardless of their political affiliations and motivations. We call on every political and public figure for moderation and equanimity, and we firmly condemn all antisemitic topoi veiled as arguments in public debates.”

MTK joins international IHRA campaign against antisemitism

Source: mazsihisz.hu

17 December 2020 Following the example of Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC), Chelsea FC and Borussia Dortmund, Magyar Testgyakorlók Köre Budapest Football Club (MTK), with a history dating back over 130 years, has joined the international campaign against antisemitism of the International

Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

MTK president Tamás Deutsch wrote in his letter to the leaders of IHRA:

“Rising antisemitism in the world is our sad reality, against which we shall fight with all our might. During its over 130 years of existence, even in the hardest times, MTK has been proud of its Jewish roots.

Besides its high-level sporting activity, the club proudly maintains its Jewish heritage.

As the letter rightly highlights, a working definition of antisemitism would effectively help the fight against antisemitism and the prevention of future incidents.

Based on the above, MTK wishes to join the initiative and adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism”, wrote Tamás Deutsch.

Facebook blocked Előd Novák’s Facebook page
Source: akibic.hu

21 December 2020 Facebook blocked posts by the vice president of Our Homeland Movement (Mi Hazánk Mozgalom), Előd Novák, from Facebook users’ newsfeeds. The page has almost 140,000 followers, so posts that previously reached tens of thousands of people now reach almost zero. Content of the page may only be seen if users search directly for facebook.com/novakelod.

We presented in our October report that the president of Our Homeland Movement, László Toroczkai, said at their event on 23 October that the Jewish origin of communist leaders shall be highlighted:



source: nemzetsport.hu



Előd Novák - source: tev.hu

“Shlomo Köves will surely file a complaint about this, but I would like to raise a rhetorical question, how is it possible that Rákosi and Gerő were both Jewish?” asked the politician.

In one of our previous monthly reports this year, we presented that in July, Előd Novák suggested to the municipality of Budapest’s District 11 that a yet-unnamed public place be named Horthy Park. The party and some of its prominent members had made antisemitic expressions previously as well.

Facebook has restricted a number of extreme-right persons and forums this year. The page of Kuruc.info was deleted, and their posts cannot be shared any more.

Facebook has also deleted László Toroczkai’s official page with around 207,000 followers. In October this year, the page of Our Homeland Movement with over 81,000 followers, was also deleted.

Where’s the quarantine? – demonstration against “listing Jews” held 8 years ago

Source: neokohn.hu

30 December 2020 Neokohn.hu wrote about the mass demonstration held eight years ago against Márton Gyöngyösi’s parliamentary speech about making a list of Jews.

The so-called mass demonstration against Nazism was organized by Mazsihisz, Faith Church and March of the Living after Jobbik’s foreign policy expert had talked about



Source: origo.hu

the national security risk presented by Jews living in Hungary. Former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, then chairman of MSZP

Attila Mesterházy and then parliamentary leader of Fidesz Antal Rogán gave speeches at the event.

In his parliamentary speech, the Jobbik politician requested that the government check how many people of Jewish origin live in Hungary and work in the National Assembly and the government who may present some national security risk to



Márton Gyöngyösi - source: index.hu

Hungary. Gyöngyösi said he believed MPs owed such an assessment to Hungary.

Gyöngyösi has since said a number of times that he did not mean to say people of Jewish origin but Hungarian-Israeli dual citizens. It is true that a few days before the politician’s suggestion, Jobbik had demonstrated in front of the Israeli Embassy against rocket attacks in the Gaza Strip and Gyöngyösi’s parliamentary speech criticised the government’s pro-Israeli policies. His question about the number of people potentially presenting a national security risk was uttered in this particular context. It was not clear how he imagined checking the number of Jewish or Israeli nationals.

In an interview given to Válasz.hu in February 2019, Gyöngyösi said he was referring to dual citizens in the government and the National Assembly. According to Gyöngyösi’s reasoning in Válasz, there is a law in Israel that filters dual citizenship, and members of the Knesset are not allowed to be dual nationals either. There is a similar law in the U.S., too.

In response to András Stumpf’s question about why the suggestion was about checking the number of Israeli citizens and not everyone with multiple citizenships, Gyöngyösi acknowledged it was due to Jobbik’s ideology at the time and that the party did not abstain from bringing up Israelis in different discourses around 2012.

“Fascism is a virus, and Jobbik is the host”, said Attila Mesterházy, then chairman of MSZP, the then biggest opposition party in Hungary, at the demonstration in December 2012. The politician also mentioned that his party would join the initiative of DK (Democratic Coalition) to “quarantine” Jobbik.

Neokohn has now contacted those who spoke at the demonstration, and only Attila Mesterházy responded to questions. According to the former chairman of MSZP, it is not the opinion of the left-wing but of Jobbik that has changed so much that what used to be unthinkable is now a reality: “It is not the government and left-wing parties that stand on one side against Jobbik on the other, but it is Jobbik and left-wing parties against the government. Jobbik indeed used to represent policies for which it could not have been brought together with left-wing politicians. Since then, they have apparently realised they were on the wrong track. This change has an impact on public discourse, too. Nowadays, similar sentences are not uttered in the National Assembly”, said Mesterházy.

The newspaper also confronted Márton Gyöngyösi about the fact that Jobbik now runs on a joint list with parties that wanted to quarantine it. The politician’s response was quoted in the article:

“Regarding what Attila Mesterházy said, it’s better to ask him about it. As a socialist politician, he did what a politician does with their opponent in Hungary when it is possible: At a ‘spontaneous mass demonstration’ organised meticulously by Faith Church, he took an expression out of its context, twisted it and then felt indignant. I am not angry with him because I made a mistake and mistakes are not allowed in Hungarian public life, there is no forgiving. I am convinced that Orbán’s reign of terror caused the opposition, including both Socialists and Jobbik politicians, to develop the capability to change.”



Source: origo.hu

**ACTION AND PROTECTION
FOUNDATION
LEGAL ACTIONS**

APF did not initiate any legal proceedings this month, and we were not notified concerning any ongoing cases either.

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.	1st of December	Jews threatened by mail in Nagykálló	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Threat
2.	1st of December	Kálmán Szalai: Demeter definitely crossed a line	Community News and Responses
3.	8th of December	Antisemitic scandal surrounding Index journalist's former newspaper	Other News
4.	9-14th of December	Vandalism and desecration in Jewish cemetery of Tállya	Antisemitic Hate Incidents – Vandalism
5.	14-15th of December	No place for antisemitic topoi in public discourse	Other News
6.	17th of December	MTK joins international IHRA campaign against antisemitism	Other News
7.	21st of December	Hungary: Orbán's problem of antisemitism	News and Opinions about Antisemitism in Hungary
8.	21st of December	Facebook blocked Előd Novák's Facebook page	Other News
9.	22nd of December	Israeli Ambassador: Jews can safely walk the streets of Hungary	News and Opinions about Antisemitism in Hungary
10.	30th of December	Where's the quarantine? – demonstration against "listing Jews" held 8 years ago	Other News

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.apleeu.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:

13597539-12302010-00057157

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