

‘It is like we have regressed 100 years’: Report warns of resurgent global anti-Semitism

BERLIN — Jewish life around the world is under attack once again by “classic traditional antisemitism,” according to a report by an Israeli university released Wednesday.

While acts of violent anti-Semitism dropped by 9 percent between 2016 and 2017, other incidents such as abuse and harassment are on the rise and have led to a “certain corrosion of Jewish life.” The study blames the surge on “the constant rise of the extreme right, a heated anti-Zionist discourse in the left, accompanied by harsh antisemitic expressions, and radical Islamism.”

In its latest annual, global assessment of anti-Semitic incidents, the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University concludes that “Europe’s largest Jewish communities are experiencing a normalization and mainstreaming of antisemitism not seen since the Second World War.”

“There has been an increase in open, unashamed and explicit hatred directed against Jews. The Jew as exploiter, the Jew as killer, the Jew as banker. It is like we have regressed 100 years,” European Jewish Congress President Moshe Kantor was quoted as saying in a statement.

While improved security measures may explain the drop in anti-Semitic violence, the report argues that Jewish communities are in fact experiencing an unprecedented “feeling of distress.” Stepped-up security may have stopped attacks, they write, but it has also highlighted the threats that have made those efforts necessary in the first place.

The report connects separate incidents, arguing that they are part of a broader trend that will likely continue in 2018. “The same pattern has continued this year,” the authors write in their assessment.

In recent weeks, thousands marched in London against what they perceive to be blatant anti-Semitism in Britain’s mainstream Labour Party. In France, the Paris

prosecutor's office is investigating whether anti-Semitism was a motivation for the killing of an 85-year-old Holocaust survivor last week. There has also been a string of anti-Semitic incidents in German schools in recent weeks. And in Poland, a renowned anti-racism activist was recently branded a traitor after speaking out against the nation's controversial anti-defamation law concerning Holocaust complicity.

"The result is of a Jewish community in many places around the world living in fear," Kantor was quoted as saying in a statement. "Neither the public nor the private space are perceived as safe for Jews, as was seen by the recent horrific and brutal murder of Mireille Knoll, who survived the Holocaust to be stabbed and burnt in her home. The general feeling shared by Jews, as individuals and as a community, is that antisemitism has entered a new phase, and is widespread in most parts of the world," said Kantor, referring to the Paris murder.

Kantor and the authors of the report also voice harsh criticism of British Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn, referring to the controversy surrounding him as a "normalization of antisemitic discourse in mainstream politics."

"His followers and supporters openly share on social media some of the most malevolent Holocaust denial and international Jewish banking conspiracies reminiscent of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, some of this is sometimes even condoned by Corbyn himself," Kantor said.

Known as a fierce critic of Israel, Corbyn has recently faced numerous allegations of having supported anti-Semitic views. He later acknowledged that he used to be a member of a Facebook group where anti-Semitic content was shared, though the Labour Party leader claimed that he never came across those specific posts.

A number of Polish politicians also faced harsh criticism by the authors of the Wednesday report over "public statements containing antisemitic messages." The report only includes incidents from 2017 — prior to the passage of a law designed to make certain allegations of Polish complicity in the Holocaust illegal.

The center's index of anti-Semitic incidents is based on reports referred to the organization, mostly by local watchdogs.

While the scholars' methodology has been criticized for failing to take into

account some incidents because it relies on external reports, the authors argue that their statistics offer a uniquely comparable analysis of anti-Semitism events.

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/04/11/resurgent-traditional-antisemitism-behind-corrosion-of-jewish-life-report-warns/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.24dc0f6fca63

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