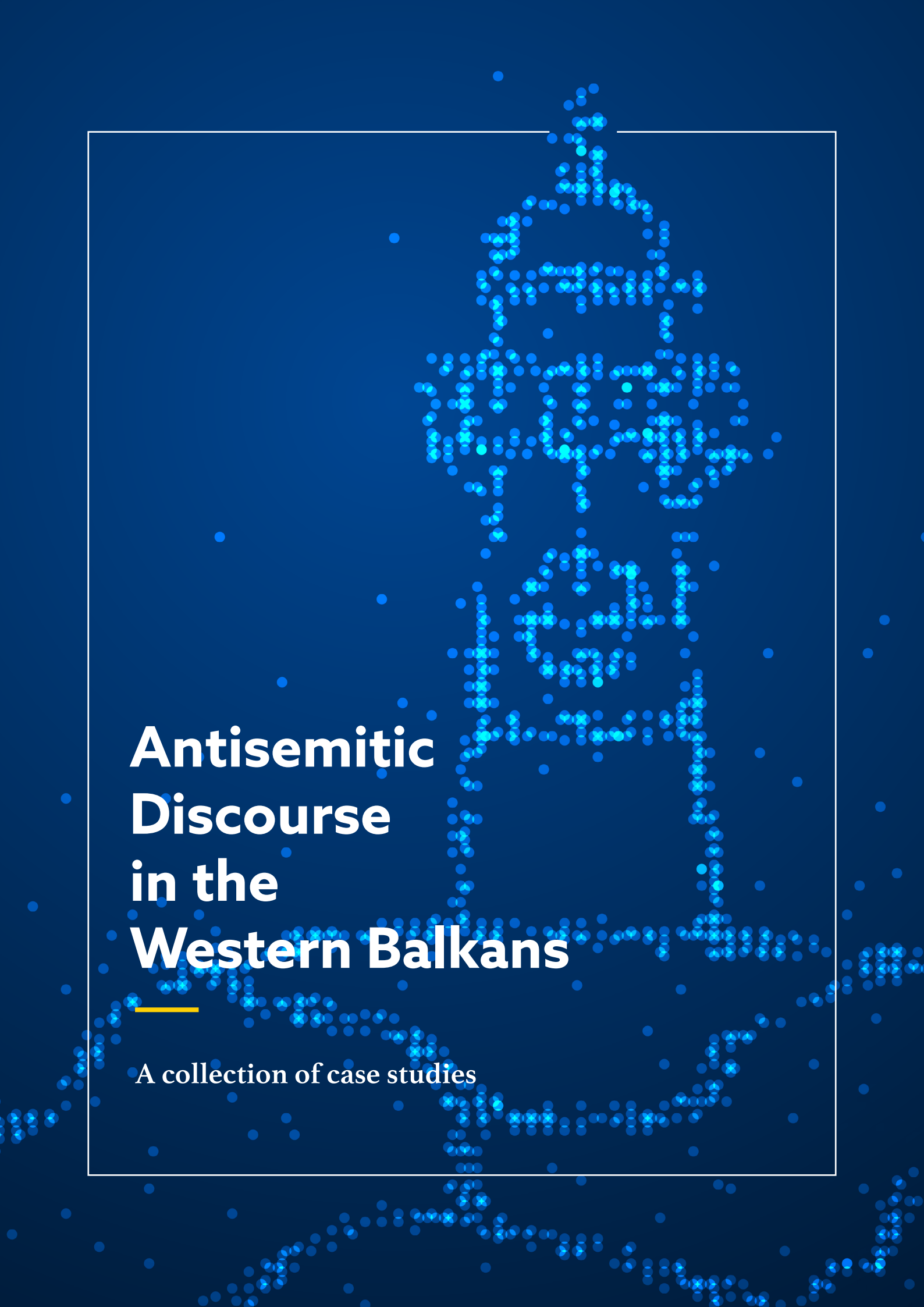


Antisemitic Discourse in the Western Balkans

A collection of case studies

Antisemitic Discourse in the Western Balkans: A collection of case studies

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Antisemitic Discourse in the Western Balkans

A collection of case studies

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 7

Introduction 9
- IRI's Beacon Project 10
- Data-Driven Approach 10

Methodology 13
- Media-Monitoring Sources 14
- Time Scope 15
- Media-Monitoring Components 16
- Categorization of Antisemitism 16

Jews and Western Balkans Societies 23
- Jewish Settlement in the Western Balkans 23
- Antisemitism and the Holocaust in the Western Balkans 30
- The Place of Jews in the Context of Contemporary Balkan Societies 34

Albania 37
- Historical Overview 40
- The Jewish Minority in Albania Today 41
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 46
- Conclusion 54

Bosnia and Herzegovina 57
- Historical Overview 59
- The Jewish Minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina Today 60
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 65
- Conclusion 72

Croatia 73
- Historical Overview 76
- The Jewish Minority in Croatia Today 78
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 84
- Conclusion 90

Kosovo 93
- Historical Overview 96
- The Jewish Minority in Kosovo Today 97
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 102
- Conclusion 111

Montenegro 113
- Historical Overview 115
- The Jewish Minority in Montenegro Today 115
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 119
- Conclusion 124

North Macedonia 127
- Historical Overview 130
- The Jewish Minority in North Macedonia Today 130
- Media Monitoring Outcomes 133
- Conclusion 142

Serbia 145
- Historical Overview 148
- The Jewish Minority in Serbia Today 149
- Media-Monitoring Outcomes 155
- Conclusion 164

Synthesis of Key Country Outcomes 167

Conclusion 171

List of Interviews 173

Executive Summary

The purpose of this publication is to provide a complex analysis of antisemitism in the Western Balkans. In cooperation with a team of researchers, the International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted online media monitoring to determine the most common narratives related to antisemitism and the relationship between Western Balkan societies and the local and international Jewish community. The publication contains seven country case studies analyzing online media narratives in the light of each country's specific historical, legal, and societal background. The aim is to provide information that can be used to assess resilience against antisemitism and hate speech and recommend solutions for identified policy gaps.

The seven countries covered in case studies are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, and Montenegro. Locally based IRI partners were tasked with monitoring online media spaces in these countries and analyzing the content of selected online news sources, Facebook sources, and related readers' comments sections published between January 2019 and May 2020. Furthermore, these partners hand-coded online media content, which allowed them to assess how widely spread particular types of antisemitism are.

Researchers examined more than 9,000 online media pieces. Although instances of antisemitic speech in online media did not exceed 4 percent of examined content, the research indicated several threats that might affect the increase of antisemitism, as well as susceptibility to other forms of extremism. The urge to assign responsibility for specific historical events and the establishment of common regional historical memory is the overarching context into which narratives related to Jews in the Western Balkans are fed. Antisemitic narratives were not substantially different from narratives seen in other parts of Europe and mainly contained familiar conspiracy theories about control of world financial markets, as well as modern conspiracies such as those claiming intentional development of COVID-19. Besides conspiratorial content, violent and vulgar antisemitic language was common. What seems to be specific to the Western Balkan region is the use of antisemitism (and often the use of a certain form of philosemitism) as a tool to sow or intensify regional conflicts. Holocaust remembrance was often used as a pretext for criticism of crimes of one ethnic group against another, and Holocaust crimes were used in many online media pieces as a comparison for crimes committed during the 1990s.

Narratives about wars of Yugoslav succession often link those conflicts with the events of World War II. As there is no common regional historical memory of the succession wars, the interpretation of events around World War II is also affected. Purposeful misinterpretation or utilization of historical events in populist narratives represents a threat to peaceful democratic transition in the region. This issue is even more serious in relation to insufficient attention to Jewish legacy and antisemitism in areas such as education or the preservation of historical sites.

Although the research didn't find an abundance of antisemitic statements in examined sources, it did confirm the use of antisemitism in local politics and the utilization of international antisemitic narratives as a tool for amplifying other political narratives. Limitations in legal and law enforcement frameworks and the accessibility of extremist literature could contribute to the rapid increase of antisemitism. Public engagement of local Jewish communities is essential for achieving policies protecting the rights of minorities and cultivating public debate.

Introduction

Seventy-five years since the Shoah, in which 6 million European Jews perished, antisemitism is still present in European society. As United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted, "antisemitism is not a problem for the Jewish community alone."[1] It is an indicator of wider societal tendencies: "where there is antisemitism, there are likely to be other discriminatory ideologies and forms of bias."[2] According to public opinion research conducted by the European Union's (E.U.) Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 89 percent of European Jews surveyed felt that antisemitism has increased in the past five years.[3]

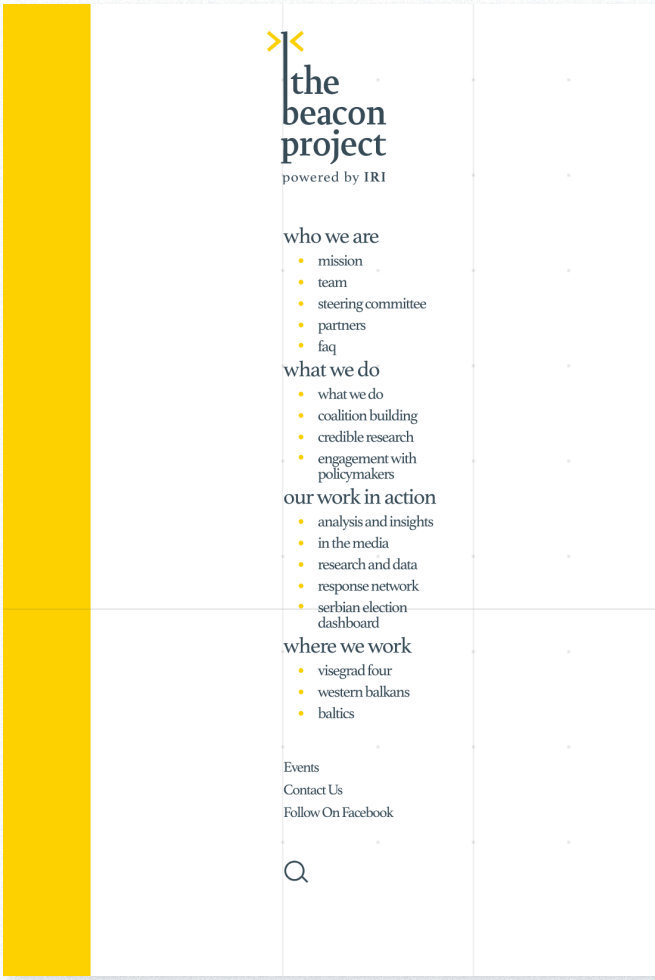
With its data-driven approach to strengthening the resilience of European democracies, IRI's Beacon Project seeks to increase the capacity of local actors, such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and state institutions, to understand the prevalence, nature, and scale of antisemitism and other forms of hate speech in the Western Balkan countries — and, more specifically, the region's online media space — in order to inform policy responses.

1 "Secretary-General's Remarks to High-Level Event on the Power of Education for Countering Racism and Discrimination: The Case of Anti-Semitism [as Delivered]," *United Nations Secretary-General*, 26 Sept. 2018. un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-26/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-event-power-education.
2 Ibid.
3 "Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism: Second Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime Against Jews in the EU," *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*, 2018. fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf.

IRI's Beacon Project

IRI established the Beacon Project in late 2015 in order to better understand and improve responses to malign foreign influence. The Beacon Project remains IRI's primary response to the Kremlin's campaign of interference which is being waged across Europe. It identifies the dynamics that allow state-orchestrated meddling tactics to thrive, while assisting stakeholders in crafting effective responses.

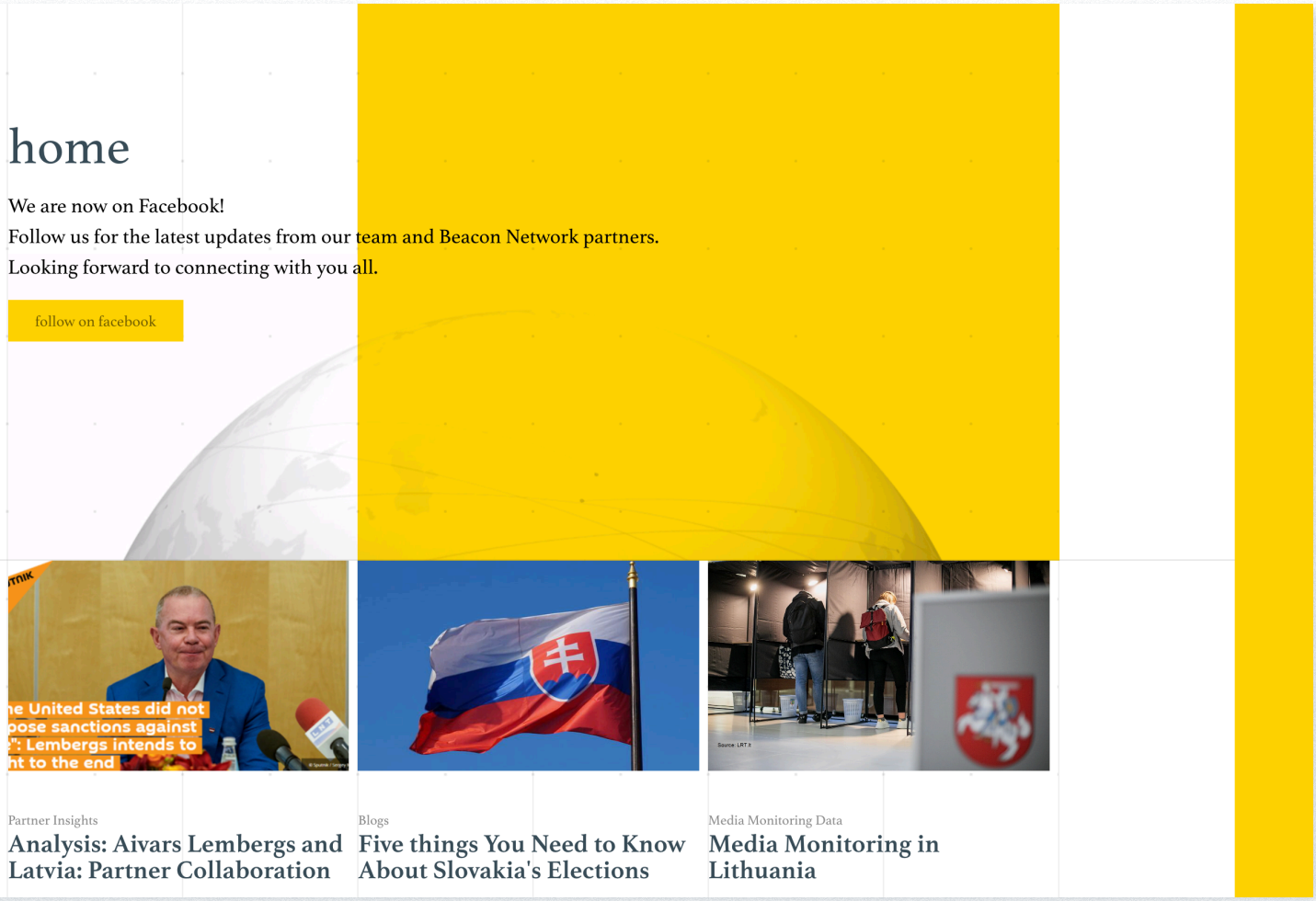
This publication is IRI's first effort to apply its effective monitoring methodology to study antisemitic narratives. The focus of the current research is identifying and tracking thematic malign narratives being spread throughout the Western Balkan region, regardless of their geographic origin.



Data-Driven Approach

In 2018, 25 of the 57 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) participating states reported antisemitic incidents, according to official state sources.[4] A further 1,950 incidents, including threats and violent attacks against people and property, were reported by other sources.[5] While such numbers are worrying, the true extent remains unknown due to limited monitoring and reporting of antisemitism and other forms of hate speech. The U.N.'s Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights estimates from available data that the number of antisemitic incidents worldwide has increased by 13 percent between 2017 and 2018.[6] By the U.N.'s own admission, the available data worldwide remain limited and antisemitic incidents remain significantly underreported, despite data being collected by an increasing number of NGOs concerned with the situation and seeking to fill the voids in official state data. One reason for this is that state monitoring mechanisms remain largely non-existent or, where they do exist, tend to lack specific focus on and consistent monitoring of antisemitism. Moreover, while 89 percent of European Jews surveyed in 2018 by the FRA felt that antisemitism increased in their country in the five years before the survey and assessed it as most problematic on the internet and on social media, monitoring of antisemitism online remains limited.[7]

4 hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/anti-semitism.
5 hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/anti-semitism?year=2018.
6 "Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, September 23, 2019. ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/A_74_47921ADV.pdf.
7 "Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism: Second Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime Against Jews in the EU."



Screenshot of the Beacon Project's main website.

To close this gap in the Western Balkans, IRI cooperated with local researchers in each country who monitored online media in local languages to identify instances of antisemitism and hate speech. This media monitoring was combined with interviews and desk research in which researchers gathered information about existing legal and policy frameworks and provisions, formal mechanisms for reporting antisemitism, and civic initiatives engaged in addressing antisemitism and the historical backgrounds of antisemitism.

Using the data collected by applying the *>versus<* media-monitoring tool, ten researchers from Serbia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia produced analytical reports about the frequency and character of antisemitic narratives in the online media space, including details about media platforms that propagate these narratives.[8] Their media-monitoring analysis was incorporated into case studies for each country.

8 In 2015, the Beacon Project developed *>versus<*, a unique media-monitoring tool used to track malign narratives and disinformation campaigns in the online media space, and to analyze their dynamics and how they are discussed online. Narrative monitoring includes gauging how prevalent narratives are in online media and in the broader public discussion, allowing researchers to map the online media landscape over a given period of time. *>versus<* scrapes mainstream and alternative online media, social media and under-article comments, and operates in multiple languages. Read more about the tool in the online manual: "*>versus<* Monitor User Manual." *The Beacon Project*, sites.google.com/view/versusmanual.

Methodology

This study combined three main research methods: desk research (using sources such as human-rights indexes, other reports of international organizations, and governmental reports), interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g., representatives of Jewish communities, academics, and NGO representatives), and monitoring of selected online media using the *>versus<* online-media-monitoring tool, which is further described below.[9]

IRI's research, conducted in cooperation with local researchers, aimed to go beyond the collection and classification of antisemitic language/statements present in Western Balkan online media (including social media). The emphasis was on better understanding how antisemitic statements correlate with events reported in media and what topics and narratives are created by these statements. To answer these questions, it was necessary to focus on a wide selection of media to get a representative sample of the whole media space and monitor not only instances of antisemitic statements, but the overall approach of Western Balkan media to the topic of antisemitism and Jews in general.

As Jewish communities in this region are small and not very publicly active, it was assumed (and proved in the initial

9 The list of interviews in the annexes of the online manual: "*>versus<* Monitor User Manual," The Beacon Project, sites.google.com/view/versusmanual.

testing) that online media would likely mention Jews and related topics only under specific circumstances (such as historical anniversaries, instances of antisemitism abroad or international politics). The research team wanted to see which of these circumstances spark media interest and whether they trigger antisemitic reactions. Knowing if an occurrence of antisemitic statements has any relation to online content trending shortly before or after the occurrence helps to determine whether those statements are an isolated incident or feed into a larger narrative. Knowing under which circumstances media report about Jews and related topics helps to further determine what these narratives are, whether they have a national or international focus, which vulnerabilities they potentially try to exacerbate, and why they do so. Identification of narratives in the media was also made possible thanks to data research of each country's local historical, social and political background.

The research was also intended to assess the risks of antisemitism and provide recommendations to combat it. Insight into general reporting about Jews, together with research regarding the current place of Jews in Western Balkan societies, helped to better estimate gaps in education and access to information among stakeholders such as other researchers and policymakers. Research regarding legal and institutional mechanisms against antisemitism further helped to provide answers about the state of resilience in the relevant countries.

Media-Monitoring Sources

The online media analysis served as the primary means of gathering quantitative data for each country case study.

Researchers examined both public and private online media and worked with a total of 341 unique media outlets across the region, including a mix of national and local outlets. In addition to high-readership, or mainstream media, researchers also monitored "fringe" media sources and sources widely known for spreading hate speech targeting the Jewish population.

Researchers worked with three types of online media sources:

News — The vast majority of websites in this category are online versions of mainstream and fringe media outlets, but this analysis also included associated blogs or popular personal websites creating online media pieces such as news content, blogs, or other articles. "News" is a broad label for different text forms, including articles, editorials, essays, blogs, reportage, etc.

Discussions — This is defined as reader comments on aforementioned news sources (so-called "under article comments"). The media sources are the same as above, but the focus is purely on commentary written by third parties rather than the main text.

Facebook posts — Facebook data were collected, however, in a smaller number than anticipated, due to a change to Facebook policies that restricted access to data during the project. Facebook posts represent less than 12 percent of online media sources.[10] Sources in this research mostly represent Facebook pages of mainstream and fringe media, though others represent Facebook pages and public profiles known for antisemitic hate speech.

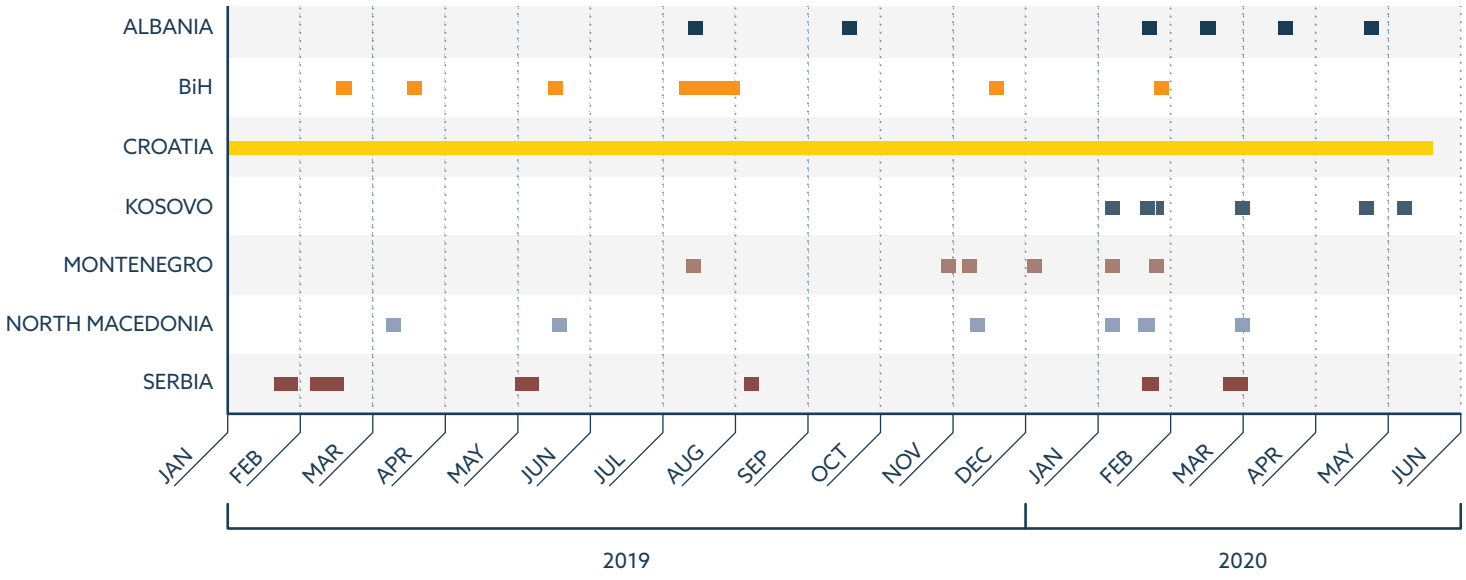
10 Due to changes of Facebook privacy policies during the preparatory phase of the project, the monitoring tool lost access to a number of Facebook sources. Therefore the percentage of monitored Facebook sources was lower than intended. As Facebook turned out to be a very fruitful source of data in this research, the authors are interested in more extensive monitoring in future research.

The sources were comprised of online media that are based in, or have a significant readership in, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania. Access to historical data of Albanian-language sources in Albania and Kosovo was limited, as many online media in these countries do not archive data longer than several months.

Time Scope

Online media monitoring was conducted between **January 1, 2019, and May 20, 2020**, and used the **time peaks** method. The original one-year monitoring period was extended during the testing phase because of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe (which, based on preliminary test monitoring, turned out to be fertile ground for antisemitism).

The decision to focus on a long period of time was made based on test monitoring of antisemitism, using the most common explicitly antisemitic language as keywords. However, this monitoring revealed only a handful of results per month (almost all in discussions and Facebook), and even usage of general keywords such as "Jew" didn't show more than 20 results per month in some countries. Therefore, it was clear that the research should be broadened to a much longer period of time in order to produce a relevant amount of data to analyze. Testing monitoring determined five general keywords that could locate content covering or containing antisemitism.[11] Their high generality ensured that online media content pulled by *>versus<* would contain both antisemitic statements and general reporting (as discussed above, research focused on both for a reason). These five keywords proved sufficient, as testing showed that adding additional and more specific potential keywords would not increase the total number of results in a given period. Monitoring using general keywords over a long period of time was an ideal solution for most of the countries. Serbia was an exception. With Serbia being the biggest media market in the region, the chosen method would require reviewing tens of thousands of online media pieces. Therefore, the research team decided on a compromise that allowed researchers to focus on a long period of time but analyze a reasonable number of online media pieces.



Time peaks in each country case study. No 'peaks' were used in Croatia due to low amount of data results overall.

11 The keyword query used was ''Jews OR Holocaust OR antisemitism OR Zionist OR Israel'' in local languages.

Instead of monitoring online media content produced on each day of the selected period, the research team focused only on periods that showed the highest concentration of content related to antisemitism (or Jews, more broadly), based on a set of selected keywords.

As a next step, the research team selected the six highest peaks in each country, and researchers were asked to monitor three days before and three days after the indicated peak in order to collect data that would help to explain what caused a particular peak and what were the reactions to it.[12] As shown in the **graph depicting time peaks in each country case study**, time peaks in each country were slightly different, although partially overlapping.

Media-Monitoring Components

In order to answer the research questions stated above, country researchers conducted online media monitoring consisting of **three components**:

1. Examining how the issue of antisemitism is covered by media in each country, and the region overall, by identifying and categorizing content from local media describing/discussing instances of antisemitism during selected time peaks. The categorization was developed by Beacon Project staff based on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

2. Determining the degree to which online media employ antisemitic language and/or narratives by identifying and categorizing antisemitic statements.

3. Researching the dynamics between the Jewish community and the general population to gain an understanding of specific relationships between those communities and their representatives in the country and beyond.

Categorization of Antisemitism

The categorization of antisemitism is guided by the working definition of antisemitism adopted at the IHRA plenary meeting in Bucharest on May 26, 2016. The IHRA brings together 34 countries (including 25 E.U. countries) to preserve the memory of the Holocaust in order to ensure it is never repeated. These member countries are accepted into the IHRA according to the terms of the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust and, upon acceptance, nominate high-ranking officials and experts to serve on their national delegations to the IHRA.[13] Intergovernmental bodies may cooperate with the IHRA as a partner to participate in and gain access to IHRA developments. The E.U. became a permanent international partner of the IHRA in November 2018. Among the Western Balkan countries, two are IHRA member countries (Croatia and Serbia), one is a liaison country (North Macedonia), and two are observer countries (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Only North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania have officially endorsed the definition, the core part of which follows:

> **Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.**

12 No "peaks" were used in Croatia due to low amount of results overall.
13 "Membership and Application Procedure," *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, holocaustremembrance.com/about-us/countries-membership.



Putin: Sećanje na holokaust je naša zajednička odgovornost

SVET | Autor: Beta/AFP/AP | 23. jan. 2020 15:34 > 15:37

Podeli:

Example of an article that was tagged by the >versus< platform as physical, false, denial, and violence.

Using this definition, IRI prepared a list of tags to categorize instances of antisemitism based on the presence of certain messages or values, as well as specific actors and countries. **Tags**, defined by the researchers, were added to the articles to facilitate recording various findings on harvested data. These tags were used to annotate analyzed online media pieces in order to categorize them, according to the **table on page 19**.

The tags table shows the categorization of the tags IRI staff formulated based on the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.[14] The categorization helps determine whether the antisemitic incident is rhetorical[15], physical, or related to property. The text below provides detailed definitions and examples for tags that were used to supplement the main categories. Researchers also developed a few additional tags to help them capture specific trends in their country (for instance, a "good relations" tag was used in Albania to calculate occurrences of media mentions stressing good diplomatic relations between Albania and Israel).

Researchers focused on two overarching categories of antisemitic incidents. First are results that report on an instance of antisemitism in the world. The second category of results contains antisemitic statements themselves. In this case, the antisemitic bias tags were used. The following tags were intended to denote whether these incidents of antisemitism were implicit or explicit within the content, as further defined in the table. The research team also developed a set of five tags to categorize themes and biases relevant to instances of antisemitic rhetoric (written or spoken) and three supplemental rhetoric

14 "Working Definition of Antisemitism," *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism.

15 Ibid. IRI used several of the contemporary examples listed in IHRA's full working definition of antisemitism to develop the "rhetorical" tags for this research. Specifically, examples from IHRA's definition were used to define the Violence, Conspiracy, Accusation, Denial, and Symbols tags, listed in the table on page 19.

tags: one tag to annotate physical incidents and two tags to annotate incidents related to property.

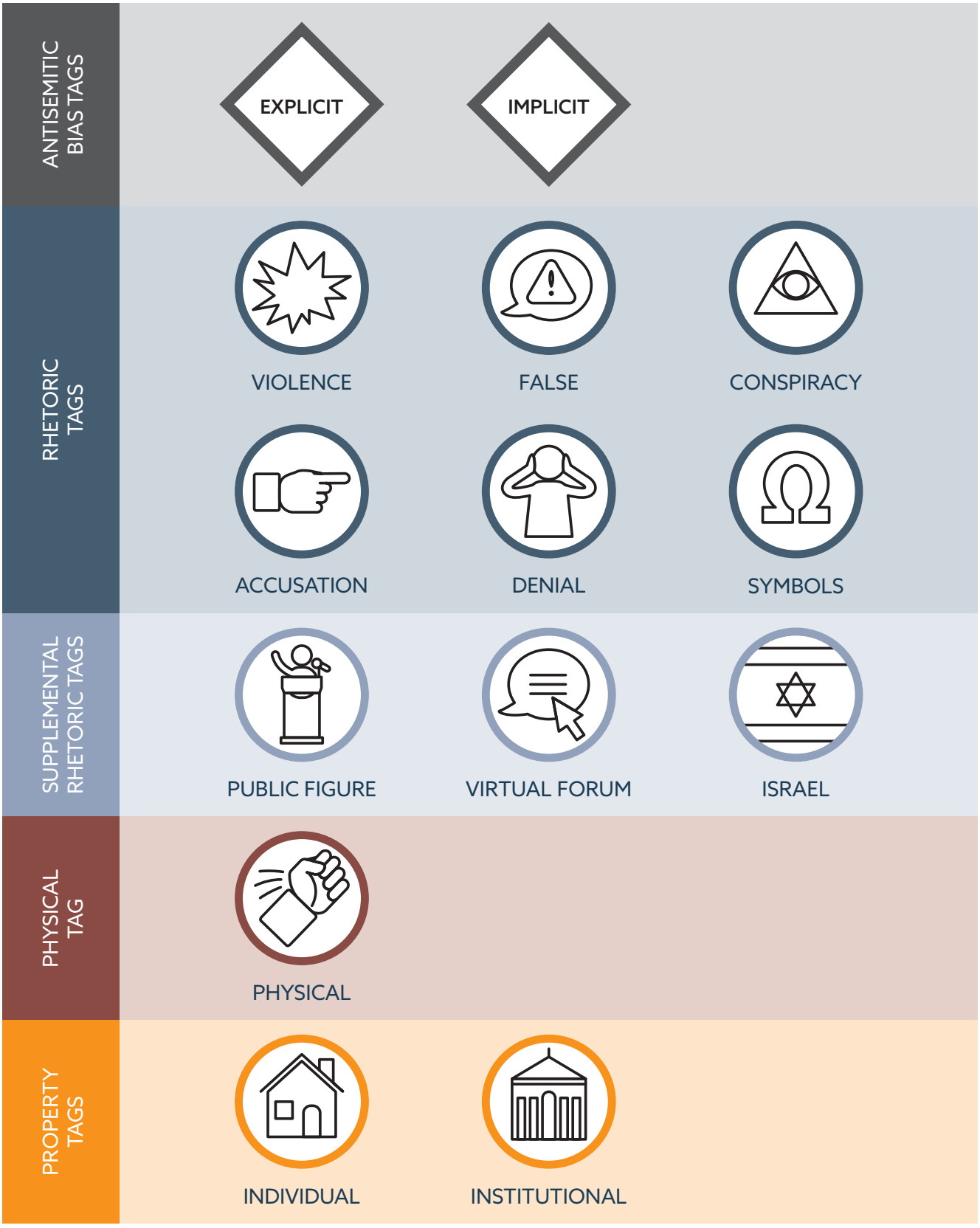
In addition, researchers used a "**flag**" tag to annotate online media pieces that contained hate speech that violated common community standards (researchers used Facebook hate-speech policies for guidance) and should be reported to the platforms hosting this content.[16] Finally, researchers used context tags, such as the relation of content to a relevant country (in the form of the ISO alpha-2 country code for each nation), or public figures (such as Vladimir Putin or George Soros), in order to gather more information for their analysis.

Online media-monitoring results from all seven countries were stored and analyzed in an online dashboard. In total, researchers examined 9,897 relevant search results. Relevant search results are online media pieces — news, discussions, and social media posts — that contained relevant keywords (antisemitism, Israel, Zionist, Holocaust, Jew/s) and belonged to one of the three categories of content described in the Methodology section. Using **tags**, researchers divided media pieces into three categories: media pieces containing antisemitic language; media pieces presenting news or views on antisemitism in the Western Balkans and beyond; and media pieces contributing to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide (including the state of Israel).

Out of 9,897 relevant search results, 182 contained implicit forms of antisemitism, and 184 mentions contain explicit antisemitic statements. A total of 4,265 mentions presented news or views on antisemitism in the Western Balkans and beyond, while 5,266 contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

16 "Community Standards: Hate Speech," Facebook, facebook.com/communitystandards/hate_speech.

Tags associated with antisemitic incidents



Antisemitic Bias Tags	
A-Explicit	Statements that contain explicit, straightforward, antisemitic rhetoric such as specific swearwords and stereotypes.
A-Implicit	More complex expressions of antisemitism hidden in the context, such as conspiracy theories.
Rhetoric Tags	
Violence 	Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion. This tag is used in situations where extreme rhetoric is used in relation to or in support of violent attacks, regardless of whether those violent attacks have yet occurred.
False 	Making an untrue statement or spreading disinformation about Jews or Jewish institutions. These antisemitic attacks include instances of slander or libel made toward a Jewish figure or institution, but also slander or libel toward a non-Jew if it is based on a premise that involves Judaism or Jews. Examples of how these statements may appear include, but are not limited to, statements that take away credibility from a Jewish figure, malicious rumors, etc.
Conspiracy 	Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the power of Jews as a collective — especially, but not exclusively, the myths of a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.
Accusation 	Scapegoat rhetoric accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
Denial 	Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers), or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of Nazi Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
Symbols 	Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel). While this tag may apply to antisemitic attacks that involve literal symbols (such as vandalism of a synagogue with Nazi symbols), it may also apply to instances of character tropes, comparisons made between someone and a Jewish biblical character, antisemitic references, or comparisons to historical Jewish figures or historical events involving Jews.
Supplemental Rhetoric Tags	
AS–Public Figure 	Antisemitic instances involved in speech or writing from a public figure or prominent institution or company. For example, a politician who makes a speech that accuses a Jewish population of accelerating the spread of a disease may be tagged with Accusation *and* AS-Public Figure.
AS–Virtual Forum	Antisemitic speech or writing that exists and was developed on virtual forums such as those on Facebook, Twitter, or other online communities. This tag is used when an article, discussion, or comment cites a virtual forum as the source or motivation for its antisemitic attack. For example, a discussion thread propagating antisemitic conspiracy theories would be tagged with Conspiracy *and* AS-Virtual Forum.
AS–Israel	In instances where an attack on Israel, Israelis, or Israeli history is also antisemitic, this supplemental tag will be used. Because statements made regarding Israel are not inherently antisemitic, this tag will only be used in instances of anti-Zionist *and* antisemitic attacks.

Physical Tag	
>versus tag<	*Description and examples*
Physical 	A physical attack carried out because of the victim's actual or perceived Jewish identity.
Property Tag	
>versus< tag	*Description and examples*
IND-Property	There are two main categories: First, any case in which an antisemitic slogan or symbol is used to damage or vandalize individual property, regardless of whether the property concerned is affiliated with a Jewish individual. Example: Antisemitic slurs painted onto someone's car, even if the car is not owned by a Jewish person or the attacker had no way to know or believe that it was owned by a Jewish person. Second, an action or expression of hostility manifested in the selection of a target such as a Jewish person's home or individual property. Example: An act of arson committed against a Jewish person's home, if there is reason to believe that the arsonist knew the homeowner was Jewish and was motivated by that knowledge.
INST-Property	There are two main categories: First, any case in which an antisemitic slogan or symbol is used to damage and vandalize institutional property, regardless of whether the property concerned is affiliated with a Jewish community or is a Jewish institution. Example: A public library's website is hacked and made to display antisemitic conspiracies. The public library has no direct affiliation with a Jewish community but perhaps was chosen because a large number of people visit its website. Second, an action or expression of hostility manifested in the selection of a target, such as a Jewish school or synagogue. Example: Someone smashes the windows of a store that sells only items used for studying or practicing Judaism.

Jews and Western Balkans Societies

The Western Balkans is a political neologism coined in the 1990s to refer to the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, namely its former republics Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia and the former autonomous province of Kosovo. The former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia is excluded, but Albania is added as the term broadly reflects the common aspirations and shared perspectives of these seven states to join the European Union.

Jewish Settlement in the Western Balkans

Jews inhabited the Balkans through successive waves of settlement. While some settled in the Balkans during ancient Roman times (the so-called *Romaniots* in some areas of present-day Greece, Albania and North Macedonia), most arrived in the 15th century and after, when the Sephardi Jews, expelled from Spain and Portugal, settled in what was then the Ottoman Empire (today's Western Balkan territories of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania and parts of Croatia). The Ottomans welcomed them as artisans and traders to boost their economy and practiced a particular kind of limited toleration of Jews and majority Christian population as the so-called peoples of the book. Over subsequent centuries, the Sephardim integrated and shared in the

Modern map of the Western Balkans.

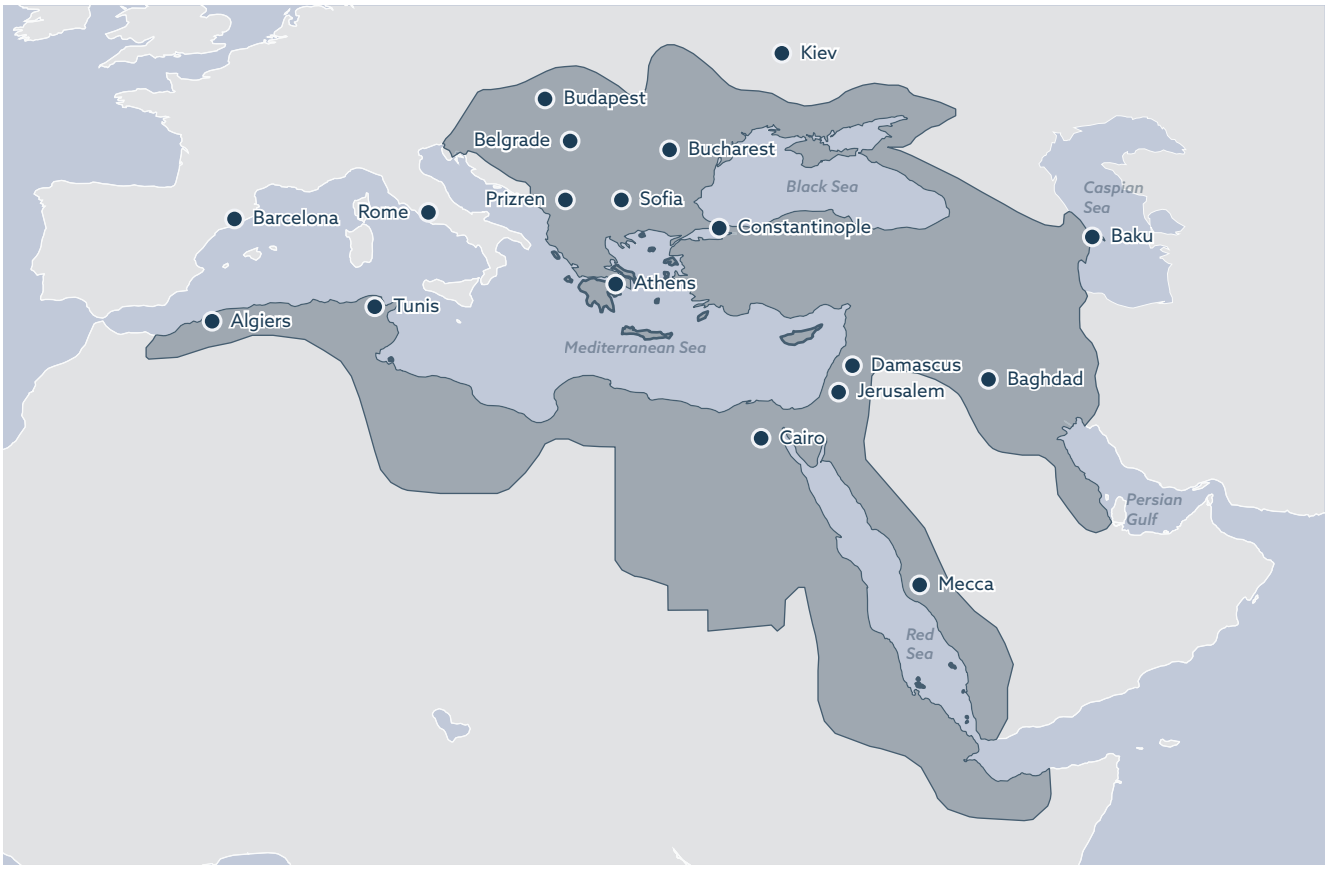



SERBIA
KOSOVO
NORTH
MACEDONIA
Black Sea
Aegean Sea

urban fabric of Ottoman society and culture while still retaining their distinct faith and language (Ladino or Judeo-Spanish).

The German and Hungarian speaking Ashkenazi Jews began taking up residence in the northern areas of the Balkans (Croatia and today's Serbian northern province of Vojvodina) by the end of the 18th century, as the Habsburg Empire appropriated the territories from the Ottomans. The biggest influx occurred after the so-called *Anschluss* or the Agreement of 1867, which cemented the Empire as a complex state called Austria-Hungary. In fact, a great majority of Jews migrated from German-speaking Ashkenazi communities in Hungary to Croatia only a few decades prior to World War I. Some of the early Ashkenazi settlers engaged in lumber or agricultural production and trade from the lands of the local, often foreign nobility, thus sharing in the negative perception of the exploited peasant population. Others engaged in liberal, educated professions, but were nevertheless often perceived with suspicion and seen as "German" or "Hungarian" by the local, predominantly Slavic population. A similar scenario unfolded in Bosnia and Herzegovina after it was occupied by Austria-Hungary in 1878, when thousands of Ashkenazim moved in to find jobs in imperial administration or new business opportunities. They too encountered a different reaction from the local ethnic populations compared to that enjoyed by local Sephardi communities, a distinction which continued well into the interwar period, when the Ashkenazim were still sometimes negatively viewed in comparison to the well-integrated Sephardim.

After Serbia gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, the local Sephardi Jews were legally emancipated and integrated well into the small urban part of Serbian society. By World War I most Belgrade Jews spoke Serbian, as well



Approximate boundaries of the Ottoman Empire in 1683.



Approximate boundaries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire boundaries in 1914.

as Ladino, sent their children to Serbian schools, and participated actively in public life. During the same period, most descendants of Ashkenazi settlers in Croatia similarly assimilated linguistically and economically and integrated into Croatian society, with the Zagreb community eventually becoming the largest Jewish community of the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, or Yugoslavia, in 1918. The Sephardim of the other territories, which remained under Ottoman rule until 1912, were generally poorer and less integrated than their Sephardic brethren in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Jews who lived in the territories comprising present day Albania, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia spoke almost exclusively Ladino and gravitated, both culturally and economically, to (by then Greek) Thessaloniki.[16] Albanian nationalists came mainly from Catholic circles among Albanian speakers and were neither legally nor economically subordinate to Ottomans in the same manner as those living in other Orthodox parts of the Western Balkans. Therefore, the establishment of the first independent state structures in Albania was less accompanied by negative views of Jews as proteges of Muslims as in Thessaloniki and some other parts of the Balkans, which were longer under the Ottomans.[17] On the Adriatic coast (now Croatia), the Sephardic communities, settled since the times of Venetian rule, spoke Italian rather than Ladino and were closer to Jewish communities in Italy. In the former areas of southern Hungary (now the northern Vojvodina province of Serbia), Jews spoke Hungarian and often completely assimilated

16 Freidenreich, Harriet P. *Jews of Yugoslavia, A Quest for Community*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979 is still the most widely used English language study of the then Yugoslav Jewish Community.
17 Renton, J. and Gidley, B. *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe. A shared story?*, (London: Palgrave, 2017). p. 171.



International boundaries of the former Yugoslavia.

into the Hungarian nation, except for the few Orthodox Jewish communities. In terms of religious practice, most Yugoslav Ashkenazim were Neologs[18], whereas most of the Sephardim throughout the Western Balkans were pre-Reform Jews.

Throughout the interwar period, Jews were transforming into a more self-aware minority that kept their own religious, as well as social and political, representation, while also accepting the national identity of the majority society through acculturation and language integration. A vast majority adopted Serbian/Croatian as their language. Time and again the Jewish leadership expressed their loyalty to the king and Yugoslavia, praising them for the relative absence of antisemitism.[19] The Law on Religious community of Jews in Yugoslavia, passed on December 13, 1929, was a major historical breakthrough in formalizing full equality for Jews and spurring a significant increase in the activities of most communities in the country.[20] The curriculum of Jewish religious instruction widened to include study of the customs, history and language of the Jews and was successfully managed by the Union of Jewish Religious Communities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, the leading body recognized by the state and the Constitution. This union was also responsible for electing the Great Rabbi, who enjoyed the same rights and honors as all other chiefs of religious communities.

18 Neolog Jews promoted nationalism by propogating an ethnic Oriental Jewish identity mirroring Hungarian nationalist identity. By negotiating a common identity, Neolog Jews hoped to achieve recognition as fellow Hungarians." Rethelyi, Mari."Hungarian Nationalism and the Origins of Neolog Judaism," *Nova Religio*, November 2014. https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2014.18.2.67.

19 Dujmović, Sonja. "Uzajamna lojalnost – državna politika i jevrejstvo Sarajeva u međuratnom periodu," *Prilozi* n. 48, 2019. pp. 129-176, here pp. 160-161.

20 Živaković-Kerže, Zlata. *Židovi u Osijeku (1918.-1941)*, Osijek: Židovska općina, 2005. p. 45.

There was even speculation that Yugoslavia, like fascist Italy, was interested in the mandate for Palestine based on its exceptionally good rapport with its Jewish citizens and its support for the Zionist project and Balfour Declaration.

According to the last pre-war census (1931) conducted in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the region comprised over half a million ethnic Germans and only 68,405 Jews (39,010 Ashkenazim, 26,168, Sephardim, and 3,227 Orthodox in six smaller Hungarian speaking communities in the north). Accounting for the several hundred who acquired citizenship each year and increased rates of immigrants (including refugees), population estimates range close to 80,000 Jews on the eve of World War II, making up half a percent of Yugoslavia's 15.5 million total population. In terms of languages used, occupations, wealth, integration and political views, the Yugoslav Jewry reflected, if not superseded, Yugoslav diversity. The largest communities were in Zagreb (10,000), Belgrade (10,000) and Sarajevo (9,000), representing 6.5 percent, 3.5 percent and 10.5 percent of the population, respectively. In terms of socio-economic structure, most Jews were middle class, with few rich individuals. Some destitute Jewish communities existed, especially in southern region of Macedonia. They held a variety of occupations, with almost 40 percent employed as merchants, 25 percent as state employees, around 13 percent as artisans and 8 percent as belonging to liberal, educated professions. Jews were especially well-represented among lawyers and doctors.[21] Yet there was a notable difference in wealth and occupations between Sephardim in former Serbian and Ottoman territories, who were much poorer than Ashkenazim in former Austro-Hungarian provinces, most of whom belonged to middle and higher classes and excelled in trade.

Interwar Yugoslav Jews with different traditions, languages and customs, could hardly develop a common Zionist ground. The degree and type of participation of Yugoslav Jews in the Zionist movement differed from region to region. The Sephardim of Bitola (Ottoman Monastir) in modern-day North Macedonia and some in Kosovo fell in deep poverty once separated from their metropolis of Thessaloniki and were most likely to emigrate, be it to Palestine or elsewhere, but not very active in the Movement. On the other hand, the Ashkenazim of Croatia, and especially Zagreb, were the most active Zionists, but less likely to go to Palestine. Despite activities for the preparation of the halutzim, the pioneers who would eventually emigrate to Palestine, the mostly silent majority of Jews in Yugoslavia, even the young Zionists well until the late 1930s, had no such ambition.[22] Furthermore, the near absence of antisemitism in that period did not foster cohesive ideology among Jews. Jews were legally emancipated and Yugoslav authorities did, more often than not, intervene in their favor. Instead of Aliyah, most Jews, especially among the Sephardim, argued for much stronger integration within Yugoslav society. It was only in the 1930s that the Yugoslav Jewry finally became united and members of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities frequently began intermarrying, mostly due to antisemitic hysteria spreading from Germany and causing the massive flight of

21 Freidenreich, Jews of Yugoslavia, pp. 65-67; Melita Švob, *Židovska populacija u Hrvatskoj i Zagrebu*, available at https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3671.

22 Mitrović, Bojan. "'Believe me, we know only one reality, and it is the strength of our youth': the Federation of Jewish Youth Associations of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SŽOU-KSHS) and its role in the formation of the Yugoslav Jewry," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 26:1, (2019). pp. 84-103, DOI:10.1080/13507486.2018.1492519.



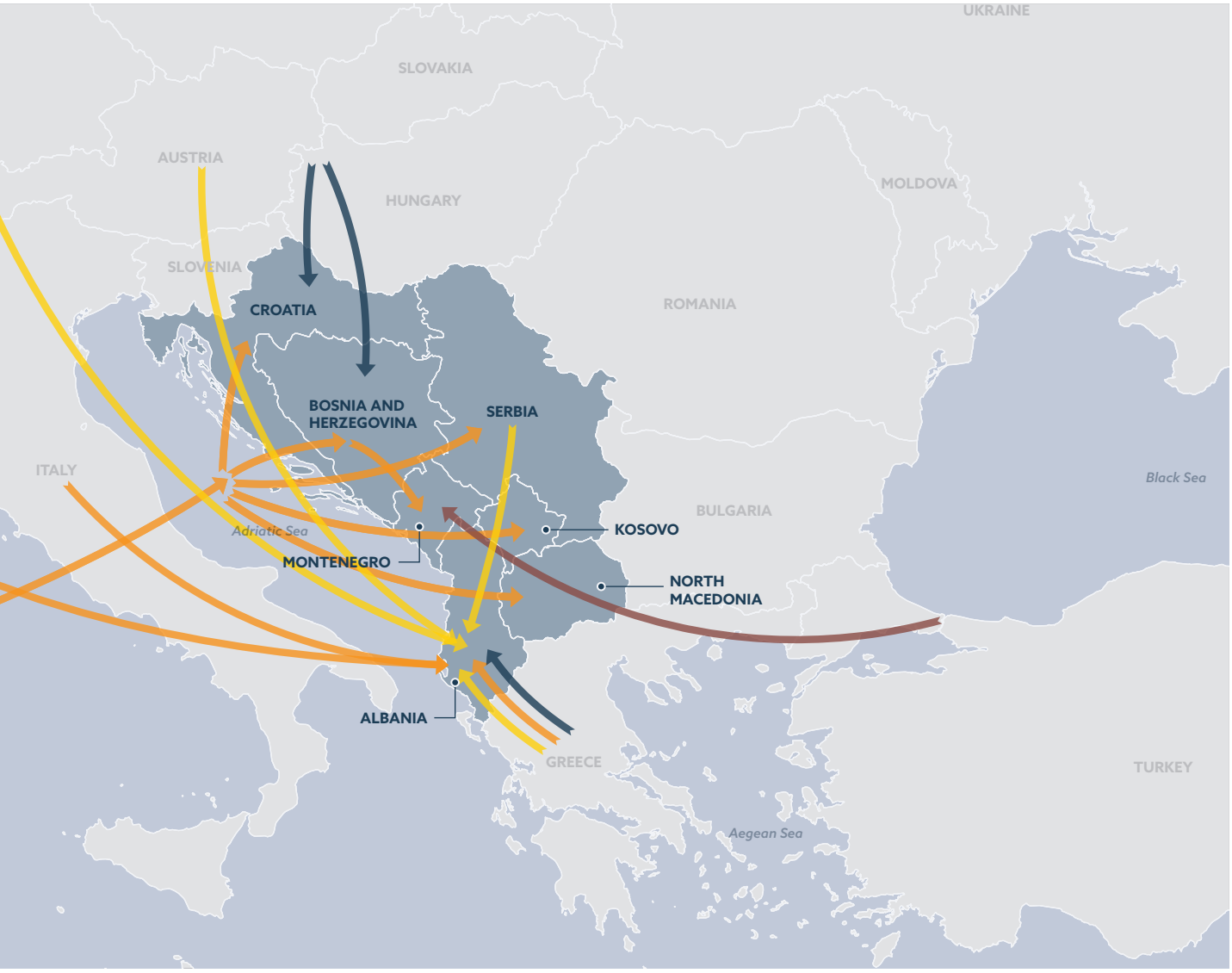
Jewish migration to the Western Balkans over the centuries.

Central European Jews to and via Yugoslavia and later Albania.[23] According to the Albanian census of 1930, there were only 204 Jews registered at that time in Albania, but they were nevertheless granted official recognition as a community in 1937. By the beginning of the war, the number of Jews swelled close to one thousand, due to a number of German and Austrian Jews taking refuge in Albania.

Antisemitism and the Holocaust in the Western Balkans

Compared to other European countries, antisemitism in the Balkans was considered to be rather marginal. An early sign of antisemitism in Yugoslavia may have emerged in response to the mass migration of Polish Jews in the mid-1920s. The arrival of thousands of Jewish refugees from 1933 revived the issue with many reactions, mainstreaming antisemitism in the public. Nevertheless, until 1938 Yugoslavia overall remained exceptionally welcoming to Jewish refugees. Even after restrictions

23 Goldstein, Ivo. *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918–1941*, (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2005). pp. 339-376.



were imposed in 1938, the Yugoslav borders remained porous.[24] However, Nazi propaganda turned powerful German minority organizations in Yugoslavia, such as the Kulturbund, into important vehicles of antisemitism. In addition to general antisemitic tropes, the Kulturbund clearly identified Jews with the Yugoslav regime and its ruling ideology.[25] Due to their support of the Yugoslav government, Jews in Croatia also became an easy target for radicalized Croatian nationalists, associated with the Ustaša organization, who in the 1930s increasingly looked to Nazi Germany for ideas and support and eventually embraced antisemitism. On the other hand, some Serbian nationalist circles connected Jews with the Croatian national project, envious of Zagreb's development into the biggest industrial and commercial center in Yugoslavia, with its Jewish bourgeoisie playing a significant role. Other antisemitic agents included the Russian emigrant church; "Zbor," a small far-right movement that attracted Yugoslav nationalists; and the leader of the Slovenian clerical party,

24 Vulesica, Marija. "Yugoslavia as a Hub for Migration in the 1930s: Local Zionist Networks and Aid Efforts for Jewish Refugees," *Jahrbuch des Dubnow-Instituts. Dubnow Institute Yearbook* XVI, (2017), pp. 199-220.
25 Bethke, Karl. *(K)eine gemeinsame Sprache. Aspekte deutsch-juedischer. Geschichte in Slavonien 1900-1945*, (Berlin LIT Verlag, 2013).

Pater Anton Korošec, who was especially influential as the Minister of the Interior introducing restrictions to Jews.[26] In this atmosphere of rising antisemitism, and under the influence of Jerusalem Mufti Haj Amin el-Husseini and the conflict over Palestine, anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish texts also circulated among Bosnian Muslims just prior to the war.[27] Albania seemed the only place spared of this wave of antisemitism emerging from Germany and Central Europe due to the historic isolation of the country, which led to few people understanding the motives of antisemitism.[28]

By early 1940, the continuous stream of refugees made the aid model led by the Union of Yugoslav Jewish Religious Communities unsustainable. The government passed decrees about internment and prohibited the movement of refugees. For those interned under these measures, the Jewish community accepted the responsibility for establishing and managing its own centers to avoid anything resembling concentration camps. Yet nothing prepared the state or the Jewish community for the emergency that became known as the so-called Kladovo transport, which saw over 1,000 mostly Austrian Jews forced to live on three boats on the Danube. While they were eventually moved to better conditions in Šabac, a majority remained trapped in Yugoslavia and were among the first victims of Nazi executions. On October 5, 1940, under pressure from Nazi Germany, Yugloslavia's seriously divided government passed two anti-Jewish laws in the form of decrees. There was a limit set on the number of Jews enrolled in secondary schools and universities and Jews were excluded from wholesale trading in food items.[29] The Jewish community and most of the public reacted with fury. As such, there was little application of these laws before Yugoslavia was invaded. A vast majority of Jews remained in the country, refusing to believe that a fate similar to the Jews of Germany and other countries could ever befall them.

After the invasion and partition of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Germany established a military occupation in Serbia and later installed a puppet Serb civil administration. During the late summer and autumn of 1941 in order to quell an uprising, German military and police units shot male Jews from Serbia and Banat (approximately 8,000 people) in addition to thousands of Serbs and Roma.[30] Jewish women and children were incarcerated in the Zemun/Staro Sajmište concentration camp. Between March and May 1942, German Security Service (SS) Police personnel killed around 6,280 people, almost entirely Jews from the Zemun camp. By the summer of 1942, no Jews remained alive in Serbia, unless they had joined the Partisans or were in hiding.

In the so-called Independent State of Croatia (which included Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Ustaša leadership, installed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, instituted a reign of chaotic terror aiming to establish an ethnically pure Croatian state by exterminating Serbs, Jews and Roma from its territory. In all, the Ustaša killed between 320,000 and 340,000 ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1941

26 Ristović, Milan. "Jews in Serbia in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of modern European history* Vol.16 (1) (2018), pp. 16-22.
27 Havel, Boris. "Haj Amin al-Husseini: Herald of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Contemporary Islamic World," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 5:3, (2014), pp. 221-243.
28 Jutta Neumann, Johanna. *Escape to Albania: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl from Hamburg* [First published as *Via Albania: a personal account* in 1990], London: Centre for Albanian Studies Vol. 24, (2015), p. 39 and pp. 260-261.
29 Goldstein, Ivo and Goldstein, Slavko. *The Holocaust in Croatia*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), pp. 76-85.
30 The data in this section are from the Holocaust Encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

and 1942, often burning entire villages, torturing men and raping women. By the end of 1941, Ustaša had incarcerated over 20,000 Jews from Croatia and Bosnia in camps they set for Serbs, Jews and Roma throughout the country (Jadovno, Kruščica, Loborgrad, Đakovo, Tenje, and the largest one, in Jasenovac), where most perished. In addition, from 1942-1943 Croatian authorities transferred about 7,000 Jews into German custody, who then deported them to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Croat Ustaša were also responsible for the extermination of at least 25,000 Roma men, women and children from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Elsewhere, in January 1942, Hungarian military units shot over 3,000 people (2,500 Serbs and 600 Jews) in Novi Sad, ostensibly in retaliation for an act of sabotage. Hungary, however, refused to deport Jews from the Yugoslav areas it annexed. After the Germans occupied Hungary in March 1944, Hungarian authorities deported at least 16,000 Yugoslav Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the majority died in the gas chambers. In March 1943, Bulgarian military and police officials arrested and deported the entire Jewish population of Yugoslav Macedonia and Pirot, which was annexed by Bulgaria. More than 7,700 people were sent to the Treblinka concentration camp, with virtually none surviving. In 1944, the SS Skanderberg division, made up of Albanians from Kosovo and the Sandžak region, arrested between 300 and 400 Yugoslav Jews in Kosovo, who were then deported to Bergen-Belsen, where at least 200 are thought to have died. A small faction of Bosnian Muslim nationalists also joined the Axis forces.

Many Jews in Yugoslavia joined the anti-fascist resistance, the Communist-led Partisans, which was also promoting equality among different Yugoslav peoples. Of the 4,572 Jews who joined the Partisans, 2,897 served in combat units, where 722 lost their lives. Out of 1,569 who served as civilians, mostly as medical staff, 596 died.[31] Initially anti-fascist Četniks, who pledged allegiance to the Yugoslav Kingdom and its government in exile, harbored very few Jews and turned into a Serbian nationalist force often engaging in revenge actions and crimes against Croats and Muslims and Communist Partisans. The Četniks and Ustašas were eventually defeated by the Partisans, which also engaged in mass retributions and executions of those deemed the people's enemy. These ethnic massacres and brutal conflicts during and in the aftermath of World War II characterized the civil war taking place in Yugoslavia in parallel to anti-fascist resistance, which altogether left many scars in the memory of the people.

Generally rejecting or evading German and Ustaša demands to deport Jews from areas under their control, Italian authorities (in Dalmatia and on islands of today's Croatia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro) and the army saved up to ten thousand Yugoslav and other Jews until Italy's capitulation on September 8, 1943. Thereafter, most Jews fled to Italy proper or were rescued by the Yugoslav Partisans, where a majority survived. In Albania and Kosovo under Italian occupation, Jews were interned but essentially protected. Hundreds of Yugoslav and Greek Jews survived by escaping to Albania, which as an Italian protectorate also included territories of Kosovo and Western Macedonia. Albanians, regardless of their Christian or Muslim backgrounds, continued to hide and protect mostly Jewish refugees for another year after the occupation of Albania by Nazi forces following the

31 Romano, Jaša. *Jevreji Jugoslavije 1941–1945. Žrtve Genocida i učesnici Narodnooslobodilačkog Rata*, (Belgrade: Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia, 1980), pp. 302-306.

capitulation of Italy. In Albania, saving Jews can be attributed to patriarchal principles of honor and morality, rather than to decisive antifascist or anti-German positions. Even some collaborators with Nazis saved the Jews.[32] In this way Albania became the only European nation to emerge from World War II with a higher Jewish population than it had at the war's beginning.[33]

The Place of Jews in the Context of Contemporary Balkan Societies

Historically, Jews played a significant social, cultural and economic role in the Balkans, far greater than their small share of the general population would suggest. Before the Holocaust, a vibrant Jewish life existed only in larger cities such as Thessaloniki, Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo, though there were also smaller towns with substantial Jewish populations, like Skopje and Bitola in the south or Osijek, Subotica and Novi Sad to the north. Remarkably, over the centuries Jews in the Balkans faced relatively less discrimination and antisemitism compared to other parts of Europe. All of this changed during World War II, when the vast majority of Jews in the Western Balkans fell victim to the Nazi policy of extermination perpetrated by German occupation forces and aided by a range of Serbian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Kosovo-Albanian collaborators. In Nazi-satellite Croatia, Croat and Bosnian Muslim supporters of the fascist Ustaša initially undertook the extermination of Jews on their own, though later deportations were dictated by Germany. Nevertheless, there is little evidence of pogroms or deliberate anti-Jewish violence in the Balkans based on local Christian and Muslim hatred against Jews or deeply ingrained antisemitism.

After the war and the creation of the state of Israel, more than half of the approximately 15,000 Yugoslav Jewish survivors and almost the entire Jewish population of Albania emigrated in several waves. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, formed in the aftermath of the war, facilitated the process, carefully mediating the Zionist aims within Yugoslavia's Communist ideological framework. From building communal infrastructure to dedicating monuments to Jewish victims of the Holocaust, the leaders of the Federation of Jewish Communities pushed through a rebuilding agenda that was a part of a wider Yugoslav narrative, and one that defined Jewishness as an identity firmly rooted in the new Yugoslav political project.[34] Social activities continued to flourish while religious aspects of society were downplayed. In Albania, communists strongly promoted Marxist ideology and tried to extinguish all religious practices. Yugoslavia's severing of relations with Israel in the aftermath of the Six Day Arab-Israeli War of 1967 raised tensions but did not contribute to antisemitism as seen in other Communist-led countries, nor did it change the model of survival of Yugoslav Jewish communities.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the region was engulfed by turmoil, first in the form of an economic crisis and then systemic legitimacy struggles, which accompanied inter-ethnic hostilities in Kosovo and then throughout the former Yugoslavia. The strife resulted in the dissolution of Yugoslavia and armed conflicts in Croatia (1991 and then again in 1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), and Kosovo (1998-1999), with shorter conflicts ensuing

32 Jutta Neumann, Johanna. *Escape to Albania: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl from Hamburg* [First published as *Via Albania: a personal account* in 1990], (London: Centre for Albanian Studies Vol. 24, 2015), p. 39 and pp. 260-261.
33 Fischer, Bernd Jürgen. *Albania at war*, 1939-1944, (London: Hurst, 1999).
34 Kerenji, Emil. *Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974*, A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History) in The University of Michigan 2008.

in North Macedonia. The Genocide of Serbs in Croatia during World War II, as well as the terrible crimes committed by the Četniks and other armed groups were used during the late 1980s and 1990s to generate hatred and provoke hostilities following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Even within present-day social media discourse, the derogatory use of the word Četnik for Serbs or Ustaša for Croats are commonly spotted. Thousands of Jews were evacuated from Sarajevo under siege in 1992 and Serbia during the NATO bombing campaign in 1999. Most of them chose to immigrate to Israel and the United States. Albania also saw outbursts of violence in its troubled transition throughout the 1990s and the few remaining Jews left.

While this research does not cover the conflicts of the 1990s, the issue of antisemitism nevertheless came to the fore by the nationalist politics generated or tolerated by the ruling regimes in all Western Balkan societies during this period. Some, such as Croatia's first president Franjo Tuđman, made antisemitic comments. Others, like the Yugoslav secret services, allegedly attacked Jewish property in Zagreb in order to foment unrest in Croatia. More importantly, the war of words that fueled and accompanied the conflicts during the crisis and in the aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia displayed a common trope or wish to be a Jew or the so-called "Holocaust Envy."[35] In the Western Balkans, Serbs, Slovenes, Croats, Albanians, and Bosnian Muslims all strove in one way or another to position themselves as victims and to compare their fate to that of Holocaust victims, while placing blame on others. These local comparisons were contingent and interlocked with misuses of the Jewish trope in the global media space dominated by the U.S. and Western Europe. The local outbursts of philosemitism, however often laid the groundwork, easily merged or replaced with antisemitic conspiracy theories. In a region relatively devoid of homegrown antisemitism, hatred against Jews has often been imported during the last three decades.

At the same time, all countries covered by this research established diplomatic and other relations with Israel. Most have taken steps towards restitution of Jewish property that was nationalized in 1940s. Actions, some controversial, were taken to research and commemorate the Holocaust, such as the Memorial Centre for the Jews of Macedonia in Skopje. In states that emerged out of the former Yugoslavia, small Jewish communities are persisting in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, among others. In recent years, a Holocaust Memorial and museum were unveiled in Albania that honors Albanians who safeguarded Jews from Nazi persecution during World War II.

35 Zivkovic, Marko. "The Wish to be a Jew: The Power of the Jewish Trope in the Yugoslav Conflict," *Cahiers de l'Urmis* 6, (2000). http://journals.openedition.org/urmis/323.

Albania

Albania does not have a significant Jewish presence; at the time of this writing, it is estimated that approximately 40 to 50 Jews live in Albania. Jewish heritage, history, and connections with Albania are memorialized in various forms, such as museums, memorials, conferences, publications, documentaries, and public events. Albania prides itself on being a country free of antisemitic sentiment and discrimination against Jews. Generally, the legal framework dealing with racism in Albania is in line with European and international standards. The legislation states that race-based discrimination is unlawful but has no specific reference to antisemitism. Still, countering antisemitism and hate-speech awareness-raising campaigns have become more frequent, mainly initiated by civil society organizations with international donor support. In addition, Albania formally adopted the IHRA's definition of antisemitism in October 2020, with a unanimous vote in parliament.[36]

There is a long history of Albanian political actors promoting a "rescue narrative" that celebrates, and to some extent idealizes, the actions Albanians took during World War II to protect Jews. Moreover, many political representatives often link this narrative with the narrative about excellent state relations

36 "Albania Becomes First Muslim Country to Adopt Anti-Semitism Definition," *The Times of Israel*, October 23, 2020. timesofisrael.com/albania-becomes-first-muslim-country-to-adopt-anti-semitism-definition.



between Albania and Israel to suggest that good bilateral relations serve as evidence of a minimal presence of antisemitism in Albania. Albanian media generally reflect narratives of historic friendships between Albanians and Jews and excellent bilateral relations between them with its selection of news coverage. Consequently, media coverage (not only in this media monitoring) pays significant attention to mutual state visits, the commemoration of the Holocaust and the protection of Jews in Albania during World War II, Israeli investments in Albania in various sectors, and the history of Jews overall. This trend was even more visible in 2019–2020, due to events that strengthened bilateral relations between the two countries, such as humanitarian help during an earthquake in Albania in 2019, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, and Albania's adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism in 2020.



This report's media monitoring indicated that antisemitism or antisemitic narratives are uncommon in Albania. Instead, the overarching narrative present in the society and spotted during the media monitoring is that "Albanians and Jews have a long history of friendship, and in the last three decades, the Albanian and Israeli states enjoy excellent relations." The narrative in which Albanians portray themselves as rescuers of Jews with a high sense of humanity, tolerance, and a long tradition of hospitality is deeply rooted in Albanian society and often used by the political representatives to increase the prestige of the country in the eyes of Albanians as well as foreign actors.

In some cases, the media refers to occurrences of antisemitism abroad, most often related to Holocaust remembrance. However, some new fringe online media and social media accounts of particular individuals and public figures produce antisemitic narratives. These have not become mainstream and remain marginal to the overall public discourse and agenda-setting. The media monitoring found traces of rhetorical antisemitism, primarily through conspiracy theories regarding Jewish people controlling the world order and economy and, most frequently, about Hungarian philanthropist George Soros's impact on Albanian political developments. The link between the conspiracy narrative and hate speech against George Soros, and allegations about Jews and their power as a collective is not always self-evident. Anti-Soros rhetoric exacerbates the antagonism between left and right political actors in Albania, their allies, and their supporters. It also aggravates the existing vulnerability of average citizens to disinformation and conspiracy theories.

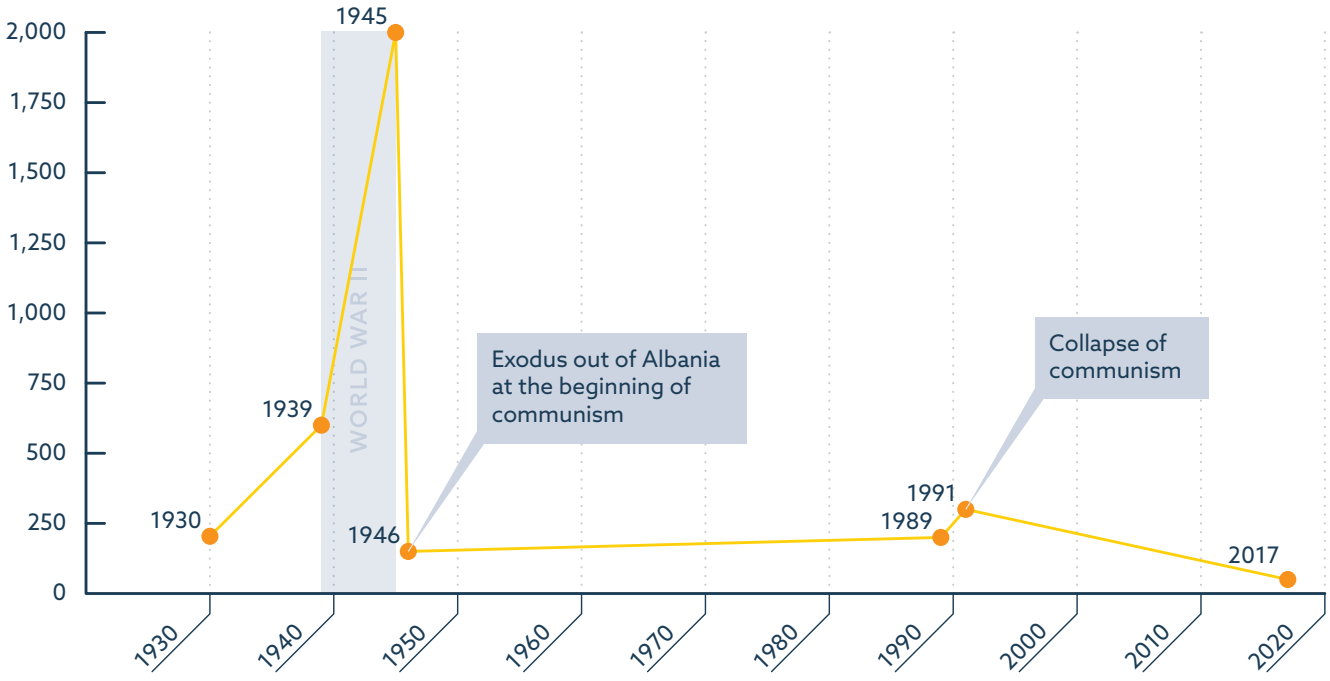
Moreover, several studies described later in this report point to a resurgence of radical Islamic groups and an emergence of informal extremist groups. The radicalization of youth by fundamentalist religious groups and violent extremists has become a cause for concern in Albania. This could create a breeding ground for antisemitism, which has not historically and culturally been part of Albanian society but could now be imported from abroad, particularly in the online media landscape.

Historical Overview

While there is a long history of Jewish settlement in Albania, their numerical presence was rather marginal. Nowadays, Jews in Albania are mostly known and referred to as refugees who escaped to Albania before and during World War II. Almost all of them survived, thanks to Italian occupation authorities until 1943 and the Albanian collaborationist authorities and common Albanians thereafter. The Albanian government protected Jews by providing them with identity documents and not handing them over Nazi German occupiers.[37] More importantly, Albanian people of all backgrounds hid and rescued hundreds of Jews. There are various interpretations of this rescue. Some survivors claimed that antisemitism was simply non-existent, as many Albanians did not know anything about Jews and rescued them as they would rescue any vulnerable human being. In a traditional society, solidarity and care for those in danger are simply customary. Others interpreted it as a particular feature of Albanian patriarchal society regulated by the custom law, known as Kanun. The Kanun protects the guests, and this protection is extended to Jews. A promise made to uphold the Kanun is a so-called besa. So, whoever is offered a besa is entitled to protection.[38] Finally, the religious pluralism of the Albanians created a society more tolerant of both native and refugee Jews.

Given the extreme nature and isolation of Albania under Communist rule, the details about the rescue of Jews during World War II emerged fully only in the 1990s and have been confirmed by Yad Vashem awards of "Righteous among nations," and numerous reports and publications. Since then, the rescue has been commemorated in Albania, and a very friendly relationship established between Albania and Israel. However, recent phenomena such as radical and fundamentalist Islamist groups and extreme nationalist ideology craving a so-

Jewish population in Albania from 1930–2017.



37 Luku, Esilda. "Why Did Albanians and their Collaborationist Governments Rescure Jews during the Holocaust?," Hiperboreea Vol. 6, No. 2, December 2019. p. 37, jstor.org/stable/10.5325/hiperboreea.6.2.0033?seq=1.
38 Ibid. p.43.

called "Greater Albania" risk jeopardizing the legacy of tolerance and solidarity of the Albanians.

Kanun refers to a set of customary oral laws developed over centuries. It states that the household belongs to God and the guests.

Besa is the Albanian sworn oath to keep a promise at any cost.

The Jewish Minority in Albania Today

According to the World Jewish Congress, as of 2017 up to 50 Jews live in Albania, out of an overall population of 2.87 million. A synagogue was opened in Tirana in 2010, where a Holocaust memorial was also unveiled in July 2020 to honor the victims and the Albanians who protected Jews from the Nazis.[39] The inscription of the memorial is written in three languages — English, Hebrew, and Albanian — and reads, "they risked their lives to protect and save the Jews."[40] The Holocaust is taught in European history modules in higher education and history courses in pre-university education. The history of Jews in Albania is preserved in cultural institutions, such as the Solomon Museum in Berat, which opened in 2018 and features photos and stories of Jewish history in Albania from the past 500 years. The National Museum in Tirana features an exhibit on Jewish history as well. Additionally, the Ministry of Culture opened the National Museum of Jews in Vlora in July 2020, a project initiated by the Albanian American Development Foundation.[41] Additionally, *Israel Today* is an online portal with a mission to provide information for the Jewish community in Albania and Kosovo.

The historical ties between Jews and Albanians and the good relations between Albania and Israel can also be noted in the fact that Albania is producing historical studies and other cultural products like documentaries and museums about the Holocaust and the Jewish experience in Albania, even though Jews are almost absent in the country. University of Tirana Professor Dr. Tonin Gurjarj explained that "Albania has perpetuated its friendship with Israel through symbols such as the naming of streets (Jewish Street in Berat and Vlora), as well as the Holocaust commemoration every January 27 by the Albanian Parliament, the establishment of museums for the history of Jews in Albania, high-level conferences, publications and through continuous exchanges between the two nations."[42] Also, the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem has honored 69 Albanians as "Righteous Among the Nations," an honor bestowed upon people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.[43]

Good relations between Albania and Israel were also evidenced during the devastating earthquake that hit Albania on November 26, 2019. According to some estimates,

39 Selimi, Llazar. "Albania Holocaust Memorial Honors Locals Who Protected Jews," *The Associated Press*, July 9, 2020. apnews.com/030e86cdf2d52b5d87b2a0a3949736e4.
40 Ibid.
41 "The JUST Act Report: Albania," *U.S. Department of State*, state.gov/reports/just-act-report-to-congress/albania/. (Accessed August 15, 2020).
42 Author interview with Professor Tonin Gjuraj.
43 Cama, Aida. "Albanians Saved Jews from Deportation in WWII," *Deutsche Welle*, December 27, 2012. dw.com/en/albanians-saved-jews-from-deportation-in-wwii/a-16481404.

more than 1,500 Albanian families are now able to return to their homes after Israeli support to reconstruct not only apartments but also hospitals and schools hit by the earthquake.[44] Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted a video of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama thanking the Israeli team for its help in the post-earthquake emergency, and thus reaffirmed Israel's support for Albania during difficult times.[45] Bilateral relations are also positively reflected in Albanian media.

As discussed earlier, the rescue of Jews in Albania during the Nazi occupation is usually explained by the besa cultural code. Another explanation, put forward by the historian Shaban Sinani, holds that other principles, such as solidarity and looking out for others — which are even more important in times of war — should be considered.[46] He also cites other factors, such as the size of the Jewish population in Albania, which was small and therefore easy to assimilate, and the fact that as a Muslim-majority country Albania did not have a history of Christian antisemitism.[47]

Another explanation is that, due to Albania's ruling religion's changes over the centuries, Albanian society was primarily formed based on ethnicity, and there has been a peaceful cohabitation of various religions in the country. Professor Ferit Duka argues that this tolerance dates to late antiquity (5th–6th century), when a chapel in the city of Saranda (then known as Onhezmi), was used as both a synagogue and a church.[48] He further notes that "for us historians this fact has a two-folded significance: it shows that cohabitation and tolerance between two religions bear testimony to the presence of Jews in Albania since antiquity."[49] The combination of such factors — cultural codes such as loyalty and honor-keeping, solidarity with those in need, the prevalence of ethnicity over religion, cohabitation, and tolerance among many different religions — could have a beneficial impact on the level of antisemitism in Albanian society. However, recent phenomena, such as radical and fundamentalist religious groups and extreme-right ideologies, risk jeopardizing this tradition.

After the fall of the Communist regime, Albania reinstated freedom of religion, which the Communist government had banned by law in 1967. Since then, Albania has seen a resurgence of religions, including the formation of some radical groups.[50] For instance, a recent report found that most Albanian jihadis have come into contact with the Salafist branch of Islam, which took root in Albania during the 1990s via several Islamic humanitarian organizations that served as cover for international terrorist networks.[51] Fundamentalist Salafism's influence has spread more dramatically in the last decade, fed in part by the dire economic and social situation in the region and the general lack of opportunities, especially for youth.[52] Although crackdowns

44 Çipa, Akri. "Albanians and the Jewish People — Bonds of Friendship that Transcend Time," *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 Dec. 2019, jpost.com/opinion/albanians-and-the-jewish-people-bonds-of-friendship-that-transcend-time-611492.
45 Ibid.
46 Hoare, Liam. "Jews and Albanians, Then and Now," *EJP*, August 7, 2016. ejewishphilanthropy.com/jews-and-albanians-then-and-now.
47 Ibid.
48 Author interview with Professor of History Ferit Duka.
49 Ibid.
50 Varagur, Krithika. "Albania Gets Religion," *Politico*, October 15, 2019. politico.eu/article/albania-religion-islam-mosque-muslim-catholicism-church-secular-state.
51 Zoto, Edval N. "Failure and Success of Jihadi Information Operations on the Internet," Naval Postgraduate School, thesis, 2013. calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/39042/13Dec_Zoto_Edval.pdf?sequence=1.
52 Georgievski, Boris. "Could Balkan Nations Become the New Hotbeds of Islamist Extremism?," *Deutsche*

by security forces and[53] Albanian Muslims are moderate and radical interpretations of Islam are rare, there is still the risk of it becoming the breeding ground for religious radical and violent extremism.[54] Some antisemitic sentiments have emerged,[55] but they are not accepted by the Muslim clergy, who argue that "Islam in Albania is entirely compatible with human rights and democracy."[56] The strictly secular Albanian state, which distances itself from grassroots religious movements, has made these communities susceptible to foreign influence. This poses a risk of importing antisemitism from abroad, even though it is not historically or culturally part of Albania.

Although studies show that there are few organizations with extreme-right ideologies and programs in Albania, there are individuals who sympathize with far-right ideologies. Certain groups, political actors, and subcultures endorse at least part of such doctrines.[57] Nevertheless, as indicated in Arlinda Rrustemi's research on extreme-right ideologies in southeast Europe, Albania seems to be the Western Balkan country least affected by far-right trends and ideologies.[58] However, this situation could soon change, as the narrative of "Greater Albania" builds up tensions with neighbors in the region and is likely to feed far-right tendencies. While there are hardly any organizations with fascist or Nazi heritage or ideological ties currently present in Albania, scholars argue that the general rise of the far-right in Europe, the increase of populism and populist contenders in Albania, immigration from Syria and other conflict areas, the difficult economic situation, and the ongoing political crisis could lead to the emergence of extreme-right groups.[59]



Zadok Ben David (b. 1949)

"For is the tree of the field man" (Book of Deuteronomy: 20:19), 2003

COR-TEN steel, plasma cut

600 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

Gift of the Karten Family in memory of their parents, Julia and Isidore Karten

Photo © Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

Welle, May 30, 2017. dw.com/en/could-balkan-nations-become-the-new-hotbeds-of-islamist-extremism/a-39045256.

53 "The Beginnings of Radical Islam in Albania," Reporter.al, December 21, 2014. reporter.al/zanafilla-e-islamit-radikal-ne-shqiperi.

54 Georgievski. "Could Balkan Nations Become the New Hotbeds of Islamist Extremism?"

55 Vehbiu, Ardian. "Çifutë and Jews," *Peizazhe te Fjales*, February 8, 2018. peizazhe.com/2018/02/08/cifute-dhe-hebrenj.

56 Bujar Spahui, the leader of Albania's Sunni Muslim community, quoted in Varagur. "Albania Gets Religion."

57 Rrustemi, Arlinda. "Far-Right Trends in South Eastern Europe: The Influences of Russia, Croatia, Serbia and Albania," *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, February 18, 2020. hcss.nl/report/far-right-trends-south-eastern-europe-influences-russia-croatia-serbia-and-albania.

58 Ibid.

59 Bego, Fabio. "Do Albanians like Fascism? An Iconographical Investigation on Social Media Material," *Modern Diplomacy*, January 3, 2020. moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/01/03/do-albanians-like-fascism-an-iconographical-investigation-on-social-media-material.

A more immediate risk is antisemitism imported by radical Islamist groups with links to the Middle East, as the influence of these groups in spreading antisemitism is not sufficiently monitored by Albanian authorities.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

Non-discrimination principles are set out in the Constitution of Albania (Article 18). The Albanian labor code, criminal code, and Law on Protection from Discrimination (LPD) are in line with E.U. antidiscrimination directives. Article 265 of the criminal code concerns the promotion of hatred or strife. The LPD partly prohibits discrimination based on a perception or assumption of a person's characteristics. While it doesn't address such, the LPD partly prohibits discrimination based on a perception or assumption of a person's characteristics. While it doesn't address such discrimination explicity, Article 3(4) of the LPD includes a prohibition against "discrimination because of association" with persons who belong to groups mentioned in Article 1 or "because of a supposition of such an association."

Other key legislation includes the Administrative Procedure Code, Criminal Justice Code for Juveniles, Law on the Protection of National Minorities, Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Prosecutor, etc. Article 24(1) and (2) of the constitution safeguard freedom of conscience and religion, including an individual's right to choose or change their religion or faith. The LPD has a similar provision regarding protection from discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs. Under Article 10 on "Conscience and religion," discrimination is prohibited in connection with the exercise of freedom of conscience and religion, "especially when it has to do with their expression individually or collectively, in public or private life, through worship, education, practices or the performance of rites."

Under Article 10, discrimination is prohibited in connection with the exercise of **freedom of conscience and religion.**

Politicians in Albania produce and spread most of the hate speech in the media, though journalists, media commentators, and opinion makers are also to blame.[60] Public debates in Albania are not immune to hate speech — particularly against LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) communities, Roma communities, and religious groups — and this is considered acceptable for the most part. A wave of Islamophobic sentiments and narratives has been observed in Albania, with hate-speech posts on social media and public television debates.[61] Such cases have recently been marked in the parliament, as well. However, public condemnation of hate speech by high-ranking political or other public figures is rare. Usually, it is civil society and academics who react to, or counter cases of hate speech.

In Albania, public prosecutors are responsible for collecting data on hate

60 "Hate Speech in Albania," *Autoriteti i Mediave Audiovizive*, November 14, 2018. ama.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HATE-SPEECH-1.pdf.
61 "Report: The Far Right in Europe Feeds Islamophobia with Conspiracy Theories," Observer.al, June 20, 2020. observer.al/raporti-europian-i-islamofobise-2019.

Legal Gaps in Legislation



No comprehensive data collection system for hate speech incidents



No systematically reported hate crime numbers registered by the police



No specific protection of witnesses and victims of hate crimes and antisemitism



Jews are not recognized as a national minority; so, antisemitism is not separately addressed in anti-discrimination legislation

crimes. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) notes that a comprehensive data-collection system for racist and homophobic/transphobic hate-speech incidents is lacking. According to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Albania has not systematically reported hate crime numbers registered by the police.[62] Victim and witness protection against hate crimes falls under the usual provisions of protection from discrimination.

Legislation refers to race, among other things, as grounds for protection against unlawful discrimination. As Jews are not recognized as a national minority in Albania, there is no particular reference to antisemitism in legislation. There is also a gap regarding the specific protection of witnesses and victims of hate crimes and antisemitism.[63]

Institutional Mechanisms

Albania's legal framework for protecting human rights is broadly in line with European standards, and Albania has ratified most international human-rights conventions. However, enforcement of human-rights protection mechanisms needs to be strengthened, including the roles of the police and the judicial system. International donors have lately begun working with the police and other law enforcement to develop their capacities in identifying hate crimes. High expectations are placed on the large-scale remolding of the judiciary system. This significant reform started in 2016 and aimed to ensure the judiciary's separation from political influences, to create a more citizen-oriented legal aid system, vetting prosecutors, and setting up new justice institutions.[64]

In early 2020, as part of Albania's presidency of the OSCE, a high-level conference,

62 "Country Report Albania," *European Commission*, May 29, 2019. pp. 14–15, ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf.

63 The national minorities in the Republic of Albania are the Greek, Macedonian, Aromanian, Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Serbian and Bulgarian minorities.

64 The new Albanian vetting law, which is part of an initiative to drive the Albanian judiciary closer to European standards, will be a basis for thorough investigation and evaluation of skills, competencies, personality, assets and other aspects of a given individual in the judiciary system. Personnel who have been implicated in activities that cast doubts on their integrity and professionalism will be sanctioned.

Fight Against Antisemitism in the OSCE Region, was held in Tirana. With official delegations from OSCE participating states, representatives of international organizations, and civil society members, this was the first event of its kind hosted by Albania. The prime minister issued a call to the participating countries to act together with civil society to face the challenges of antisemitism in the OSCE region. Albania has been an observer member of IHRA since 2014 and organizes an annual commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day with its support. The Council of Europe supports the authorities, educational institutions, and civil society in Albania to run awareness-raising campaigns and other educational activities in solidarity with Jewish people and speak up against antisemitic hate speech.

The ECRI maintains that the People's Advocate (ombudsman) and Commission for the Protection from Discrimination (CPD) have established a very effective and collegial relationship in which both institutions have built on each other's mandate, capacities, and expertise. Staffing levels at the CPD, as well as in regional offices, have been increased for monitoring and reporting. Over the years, the CPD has compiled examples of best practices dealing with hate speech on ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, and gender identity, under the prohibition of harassment as a form of discrimination. The People's Advocate and the CPD have made racist and homophobic/transphobic hate speech a prominent topic in their work, acknowledging that this problem must be tackled effectively.[65]

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

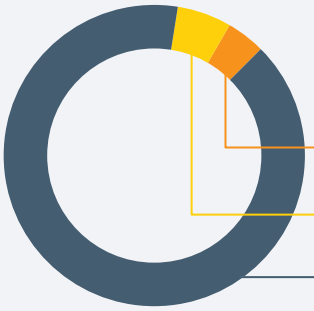
Media monitoring in Albania focused solely on Albanian-language sources. Researchers worked with 457 relevant media pieces.[66] Of these, 17 pieces contained antisemitic statements, and 28 discussed concrete instances of antisemitism. The rest of the relevant media pieces contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

The types of antisemitism that appeared most frequently were **rhetoric**, **conspiracy**, and **violence**.[67] Antisemitic statements most commonly took the form of **conspiracy** (five times) or **false** (three times). However, the most frequent relevant mentions in the monitored media articles focused on descriptions of the good relations between Albania and Israel (55 tags), COVID-19 in Israel (38 tags), memorialization (14 tags), Holocaust remembrance (13 tags), and the recognition of Kosovo by Israel (10 tags). Antisemitic statements were rarely present, though some traces of antisemitism rhetoric could be observed in relation to conspiracy theories regarding George Soros and Jewish people controlling the world order and economy.

Coverage of antisemitism was focused mainly on Albania. Some online media referred to antisemitism abroad, but this was rare. Most media discussed antisemitism only in relation to Holocaust remembrance.[68]

65 European Commission, "Country Report Albania," 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf.
66 See section–Methodology: Categorization of Antisemitism.
67 "Conspiracy" was used seven times, "violence" eight, "false" three and "accusations" once. The "physical" tag was used six times.
68 For example: Cama, Aida. "Perkujtimi i Holokaustit — Mbrojtje e te Drejtave te Nieriut," *Deutsche Welle*, January 29, 2019. dw.com/sq/p%C3%ABrkujtimi-i-holokaustit-mbrojtje-e-t%C3%AB-drejtave-t%C3%AB-njeriut/a-47278610.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 457 relevant media pieces:

- **3.7%** contained antisemitic statements
- **6.1%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **90%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

RHETORIC | SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | PHYSICAL | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



VIOLENCE

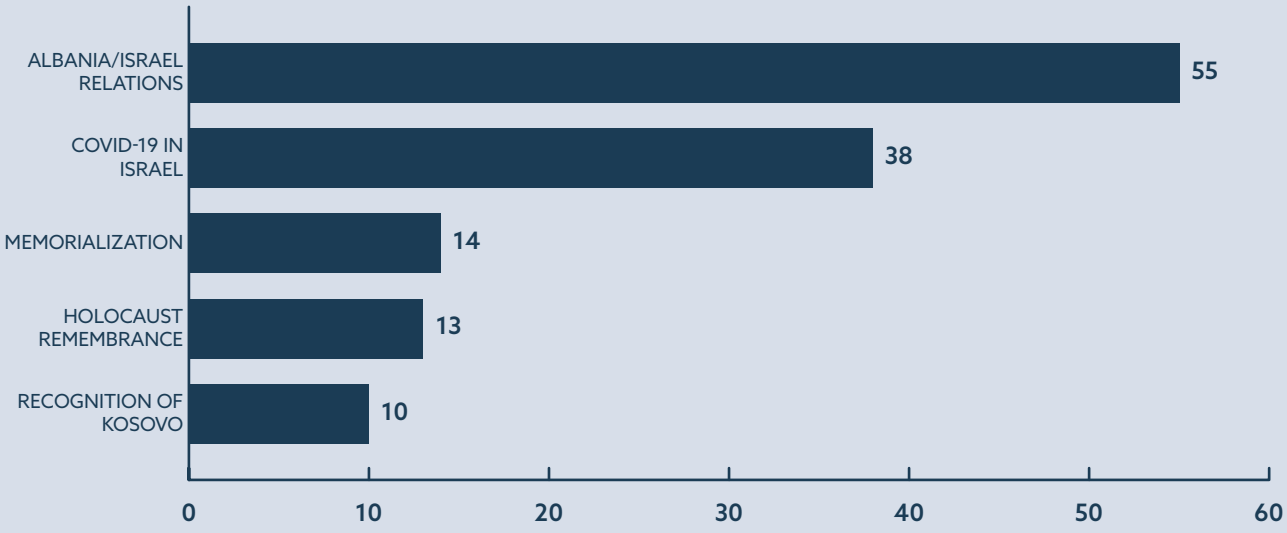


CONSPIRACY

VIOLENCE: Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

CONSPIRACY: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the power of Jews as a collective.

Most frequent mentions:



Antisemitic Narratives

Antisemitism is not frequently discussed in Albanian media. The only noticeable antisemitic narrative refers to conspiracy theories regarding George Soros's role in influencing and even controlling Albania's political process. These theories are primarily created in social and online media, such as private and fringe news portals, and subsequently picked up by other media. Since members of today's political opposition in Albania use this narrative, it most often appears in news reporting about the political opposition's activities. However, this narrative is more about Soros's political impact in Albania as a Jewish philanthropist and donor than about the power of Jews as a collective.

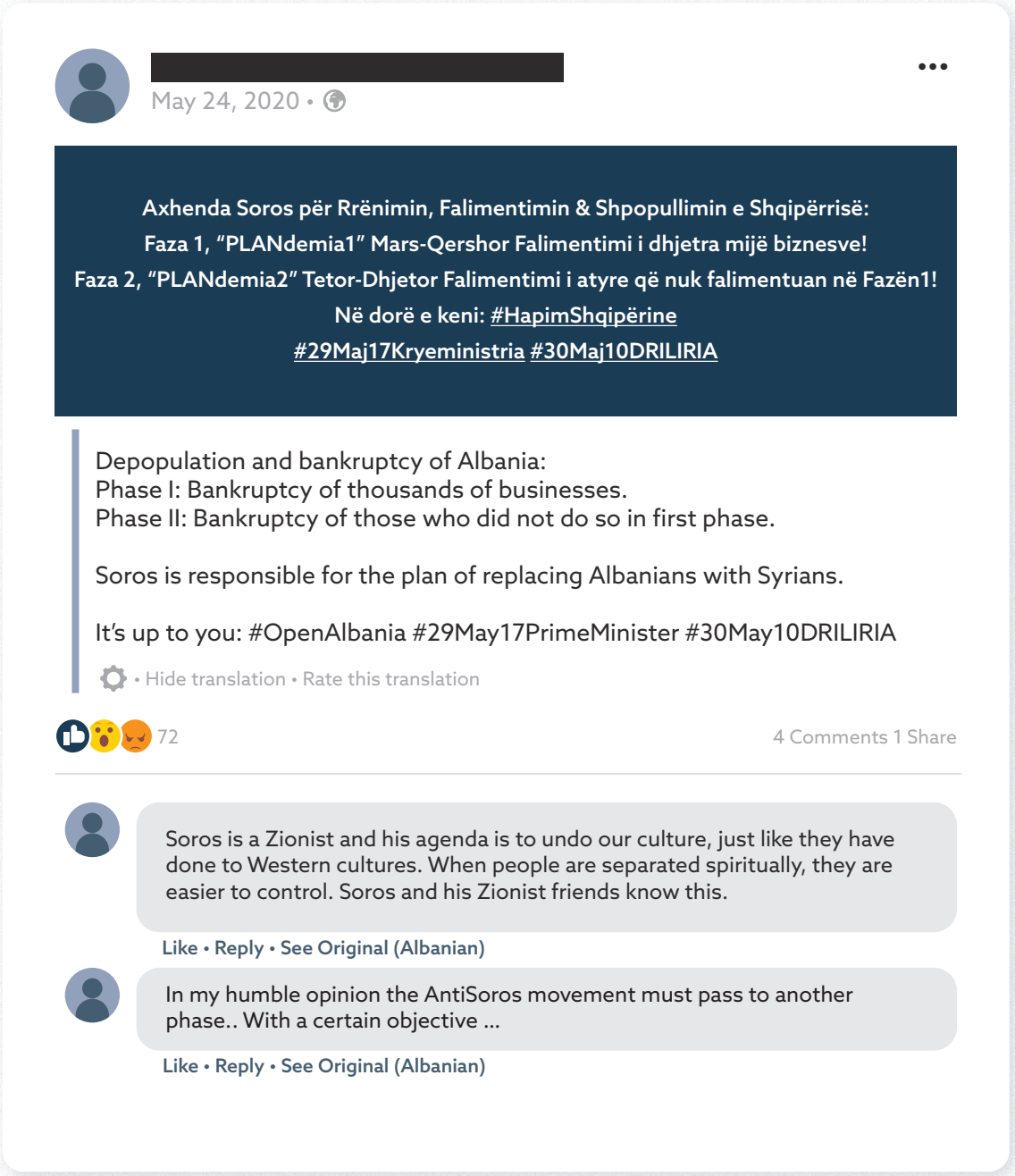
George Soros in the 1990s.



The conspiracy narrative targeting George Soros and his actual or assumed impact on Albanian politics is tied to a larger narrative focusing on foreign actors controlling political decision-making in the country, which is used in political clashes between opposing political actors. The portrayal of Soros as the mastermind of a globalist movement and a left-wing radical who seeks to undermine the established order is now part of Albania's mainstream political discourse. For instance, the opposition center-right Democratic Party (PD) leader, Lulzim Basha, claimed in 2017 to have been "viciously attacked" by George Soros, his organizations and supporters, because he is an overt Donald Trump supporter.[69] He claimed that the international media have attacked him, and he has implicitly argued that Soros controls the mainstream international media. The name Soros crops up frequently in attacks against independent NGOs, journalists, and government critics, and is connected with alleged plans to bring down governments and destabilize countries. Soros's Open Society Foundation has come under pressure in Albania because it supported judicial reforms currently underway. Some members of parliament (MPs) have called the reforms "Soros-sponsored."[70] In addition, in 2019, President Ilir Meta claimed that Soros was behind a conspiracy to seize control of Albania by interfering in local elections.[71] This narrative is also part of a wider anti-Soros campaign in the Western Balkans, as the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) has previously reported.[72]

George Soros was influential in Albania in the early 1990s because of his extensive support for civil society. This activity elicited

69 Mejdini, Fatjona. "Albanian Opposition Leader Claims to Be Soros Target," *BalkanInsight*, March 28, 2017. balkaninsight.com/2017/03/28/albanian-opposition-leader-claims-of-being-a-soros-s-target-03-28-2017.
70 Ibid.
71 "Meta Sulmon Ramen dhe Sorosin: Ne 13 Tetor Zgjedhje te Pergjithshme dhe Per President," *Shekulli*, July 2, 2019. shekulli.com.al/komplot-kunder-demokracise-ilir-meta-sulmon-ramen-dhe-sorosin.
72 "Soros Foundation Blames Attacks on 'Illiberal Governments,'" *BalkanInsight*, February 10, 2017. balkaninsight.com/2017/02/10/soros-foundation-rebuffs-balkan-governments-attacks-02-09-2017.



Example of a Facebook post against Soros with allegations of his controlling Albanian politics and aiming to destroy the country.

some harsh judgments, particularly by the former leader of the Democratic Party of Albania. Sali Berisha, who is also the former President of Albania, continues to claim that "after 4–5 years I realized that this was an almost entirely one-sided investment and George Soros set up a network of associations which in 80-90% of them were the levers of the former communist party, the socialist party that changed its name. It was a marvel of damage to the role and mission of civil society."[73] Though now led by Lulzin e-Basha, the Democratic Party of Albania continues to reinforce the narrative articulated by Berisha, of George Soros controlling judicial reform and financing and supporting only left-wing parties, organizations, and movements to

73 Picari, Mimoza. "George Sorosi dhe Debatet per Ndikimin e Tij ne Shqiperi," *VoA*, September 16, 2020. zeriamerikes.com/a/5085450.html.

the detriment of the right. Other conspiracy scenarios within this narrative include "Soros is depopulating Albania," referring to increased migration of Albanian citizens to European countries such as Germany. Other cases relate to Soros's alleged impact on the higher-education system in Albania, with accusations that former Deputy Minister of Education Taulant Muka is a Soros "handmaid" who blackmails academics to achieve Soros's goals.[74]

The **first time peak** — July 2019 — focused on a bomb exploding in a Pirra jewelry store in Tirana whose owners are believed to be Albanian Jews.[75] However, no hate crime allegations have been made. A second narrative concerned the good relations between Israel and Albania evidenced, for example, by an interview with the Albanian ambassador in Israel.[76]

The **second time peak** — September 2019 — focused on general elections in Israel. Albanian online media widely covered this political event.[77] There was no dominating antisemitic narrative. The tone of the articles was neutral and simply reported the events.

The **third time peak** — January 2020 — again focused on good relations between Israel and Albania as it coincided with President Ilir Meta's official visit to Israel during the Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem.[78] Another widely covered event was Israel's recognition of Kosovo.

The **fourth time peak** — February 2020 — mainly covered an international donor conference convened in support of Albania in the wake of the devastating November 2019 earthquake. The international donors' conference, Together for Albania, organized by the European Union, took place on February 17, 2020, in Brussels. About 100 delegations from the European Union, member states, and partners, including international organizations and civil society gathered, and €1.15 billion was pledged.[79] Israel was also one of the key donors present, and its contribution was widely covered in the media.[80]

The **fifth time peak** — March 2020 — was dominated by reporting on Israeli politics and creating a new government and coalition.[81]

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74 "Avokati Zbulon Skandalin/Taulant Muka, I Derguar i Soros per te Shantazhuar Pedagoet," *City News Albania*, December 24, 2018. cna.al/2018/12/24/avokati-zbulon-skandalin-taulant-muka-i-derguar-i-soros-per-te-shantazhuar-pedagoget.

75 "Shperthen Bombola ne Argjendari ne Ish-Bllok Plagosen Pronaret Burre e Grua, Punonjesja dhe dy Kalimtare," Shqiptarja, July 15, 2019. shqiptarja.com/lajm/shpwrthim-nw-zonwn-e-ishbllokut. (Accessed October 1, 2020).

76 "Ambasadori i Shqiperise ne Izrael, Canaj: Nga Armiqte Tek Miqte me te Mire," Dosja.al, dosja.al/ambasadori-i-shqiperise-ne-izrael-canaj-nga-armiqte-tek-miqte-me-te-mire. (Accessed October 1, 2020).

77 For examples: abcnews.al/etiketa/izrael/page/3/, top-channel.tv/2019/09/17/izrael-netanyahu-perballet-me-nje-rival-te-forte-ne-zgjedhje/; tvklan.al/ne-izrael-mbahen-zgjedhjet-e-pergjithshme/.

78 "Presidenti Shqiptar Ilir Meta: Kemi Iidhje 'Fantastike' me Izraelin," *Izraeli Sot*, January 24, 2020. izraelisot.com/2020/01/24/presidenti-shqiptar-ilir-meta-kemi-lidhje-fantastike-me-izraelin/; "Ambasadorja Kosovare ne SHBA, Vlora Citaku: Populli yne ka si Shembull Izraelin," *Izraeli Sot*, July 16, 2019. izraelisot.com/2019/07/16/ambasadorja-kosovare-ne-shba-vlora-citaku-populli-yne-ka-si-shembull-izraelin/; "Forumi i Holokaustit ne Yad Vashem: Bashke Kunder Antisemitizmit," *Bota Sot*, January 21, 2020. botasot.info/bota/1221486/forumi-i-holokaustit-ne-yad-vashem-bashke-kunder-antisemitizmit/.

79 "EU and International Donors Pledge €1.15 Billion for Reconstruction After the Earthquake in Albania," *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*, February 17, 2020. ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/eu-and-international-donors-pledge-%E2%82%AC115-billion-reconstruction-after-earthquake_en.

80 "Ambassadori Cohen: Izraeli, Projekte te Medha ne Shqiperi," Dita, March 2, 2015. gazetadita.al/ambasadori-cohen-izraeli-projekte-te-medha-ne-shqiperi/; "Konferenca e Donatoreve 'Bashke per Shqiperine' 1.15 Miliarde € per Rindertimin pas Termetit, Prej Tyre 300 Mlm € Grante (Dhurate)!," *Shqiptarja*, February 17, 2020. shqiptarja.com/lajm/konferenca-e-donatoreve-ne-bruksel-rama-sot-dita-e-madhe-per-shqiptaret-shpresoj-shum. (Accessed September 1, 2020).

81 "Presidenti i Izraelit i Jep Gantzit Mandatin per Formimin e Qeverise," *Bota Sot*, March 16, 2020. botasot.info/

Peaks in Media Monitoring

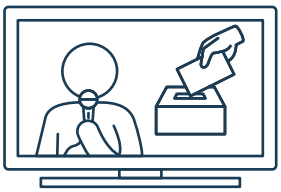




1 JULY 2019

Focused on the Pirra Jewelry store explosion of a bomb in Tirana whose owners are believed to be Albanian Jews. However, no hate crime allegations have been made.

A second narrative concerned the good relations between Israel and Albania evidenced, for example, by the interview of the Albanian ambassador in Israel.



2 SEPTEMBER 2019

Focused on general elections in Israel. Albanian online media widely covered this political event. There was no dominating antisemitic narrative. The tone of the articles is neutral and simply reported the political events.



3 JANUARY 2020

Again focused on good relations between Israel and Albania as they coincided with President Ilir Meta's official visit into Israel, during the Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem.

Another widely commented event was Kosovo's recognition by Israel.





4 FEBRUARY 2020

Mainly covered the international donor conference "Together for Albania," which convened in support of Albania in the wake of the November 2019 earthquake. About 100 delegations from the E.U., member states and partners, including international organizations and civil society, gathered and €1.15 billion total was pledged. Israel was also one of the key donors present and its contribution was widely covered in the media.

5 MARCH 2020

Was dominated by reporting on Israeli politics and the creation of a new government and coalition.





6 APRIL 2020

Focused on the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel and its approach to handling the situation.

An article published by the Anti-Soros Movement in Albania. Text reads: "The full accusation of lawyer against the democratic opposition party: It spoke in defense of Soros. President Meta: Weird conspiracy of Soros against Albania."

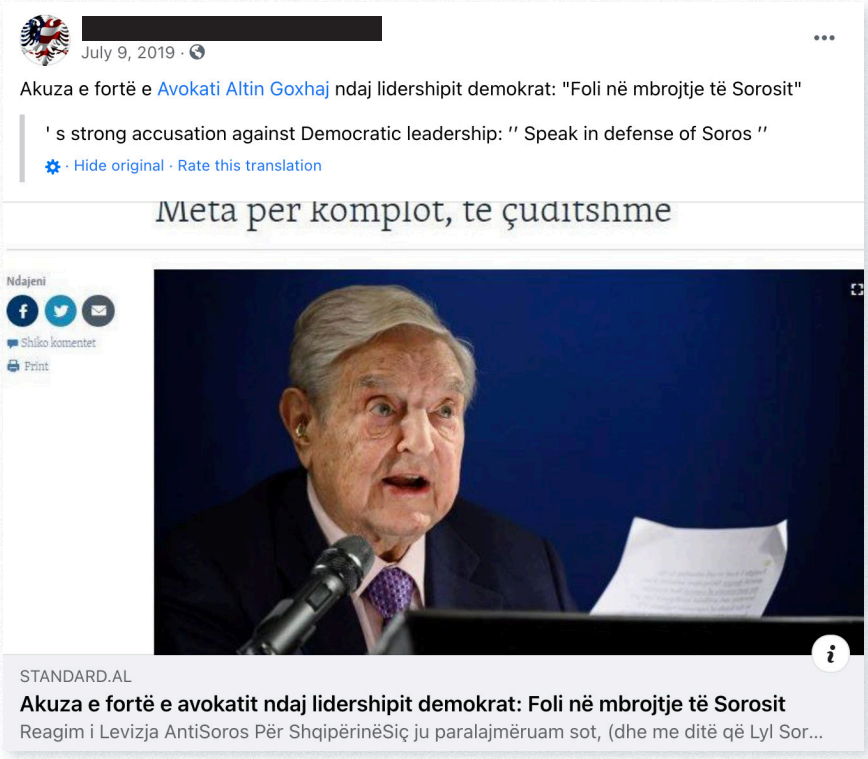
The **sixth time peak** — April 2020 — focused on the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel and its approach to handling the situation.

Countries Mentioned and Sources

Israel is the country mentioned most often in the monitored media, usually in covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel, parliamentary elections, or the Albanian president's official state visit to Israel. For instance, some headlines included: "New Government to Be Formed in Israel," "President Meta in State Official Visit in Israel," and "Surge of COVID-19 Cases in Israel."

The highest number of relevant mentions discussing antisemitism was found in news sites, primarily online news portals. The media that produced the biggest number of such articles were *Shqiptarja.com* (an online news portal), *BalkanWeb* (the online news site of the *News24* TV channel, privately owned and one of the oldest established online news portals), *Dosja-al* (an online news portal developed in the past three years), *gazetadita.al* (a national newspaper with print and online versions), *gazetaimpact.com* (an online news portal), *gazetatema.net* (a national newspaper with print and online versions), *izraelisot.al* (a news platform focused on Israel and Albania) and *oranews.al* (private TV).

The media that produced articles containing antisemitic content were the Facebook page of the Anti-Soros Movement Albania, established in 2016, which claims that Soros is organizing a plot to destroy and depopulate Albania.[82] The movement is primarily active on social media. Other producers of antisemitic content were lawyer Altin Goxhaj (through his official public-figure account on Facebook), the online news portal *gazetatema.net*, the JOQ website (a mixture of citizen-created content and an online news portal focused on investigative news, satire, and memes), *Gazeta Dita* (a daily newspaper) and the online news portals *Pamfleti*, *Syri.net*, and *Dosja.al*, as well as comments under their posts, particularly when the reporting is on right-wing political actors attacking Soros.[83]



azia-bota/1254616/presidenti-i-izraelit-i-jep-gantzit-mandatin-per-formimin-e-qeverise/.

82 Levizja AntiSoros Per Shqiperine, *Facebook*. facebook.com/LevizjaAntiSoros. (Accessed September 12, 2020). The Anti-Soros movement defines itself as: "The Albanian-American Movement against the Sorosian Oligarchy (abbreviated 'ANTISOROSIAN MOVEMENT') is a Patriotic Political Movement Against the Sorosian Controlling Caste that controls Albania (defined as the Sorosian Oligarchy)!"

83 Avokati Altin Goxhaj Vs Qeveriu, *Facebook*, facebook.com/qeveriu. This page belongs to a professional lawyer engaged in social activism against the government of the Socialist Party of Albania, and the founder of the Anti-Soros Movement in Albania.

Posts and articles containing conspiracy theories attacking George Soros are directed to all citizens of Albania. It is not possible to identify a strategy through which various audiences are targeted with antisemitic narratives.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

Based on this media monitoring, antisemitism is only vaguely present in Albanian media. The most prominent narrative consists of conspiracy theories regarding George Soros's role in influencing and even controlling Albania's political processes. The current opposition, centering around the Democratic Party of Albania, reinforces this narrative of George Soros controlling judicial reform in Albania and the financing and support of exclusively left-wing parties, organizations, and movements. The Anti-Soros Movement further spreads the narrative mentioned above.[84] Current anti-Soros conspiracy rhetoric exacerbates the antagonism between opposing political actors in Albania (the Socialist Party on the left of the political spectrum and the Democratic Party on the right) and their political allies and supporters.

The consequences of anti-Soros rhetoric relate not so much to hate speech but to spreading conspiracy theories and disinformation. To date, there is no evidence of this impacting or increasing ethnic tension or nationalism with respect to the Jewish population. The prevailing narrative is that of Jewish-Albanian friendship, working together during the Nazi occupation, and good relations between Israel and Albania. As noted, for reasons that have been pointed out by historians and sociologists, antisemitism has historically failed to take root among Albanians. Still, today, as a result of globalization and cultural and religious pathologies, a spread of antisemitic attitudes is observed among extremist Islamic groups and circles and some informal social groups and organizations with extreme-right ideologies.

Antisemitism may not have cultural roots, but that does not make Albanians immune to it.[85] Some argue that "as the fight against antisemitism is a priority for today's Western culture, as part of a broader movement seeking the protection of diversity, inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance and coexistence with the Other, but also permanent distancing from the persecution of Jews during the Second World War and the Holocaust, then we [Balkan societies] too — as societies with certain aspirations — are diligently appropriating (sometimes honestly sometimes opportunistic) some of the trophies and styles characteristic of other societies and cultures where antisemitism has been and remains troubling."[86] With its aspiration to join the European Union and its allegiances to Euro-Atlantic powers, particularly the E.U. and the United States, Albania seeks to demonstrate similar dedication to the fight against antisemitism, even though it has never been a troubling issue in the country.

In addition to the contextual reasons and events that led to increased coverage of Jews and Israel in the Albanian media during this monitoring, other reasons might be identified. For instance, the prevailing media narrative of good relations between Albania and Israel during this monitoring can be linked to the Albanian chairmanship of the OSCE for 2020.[87] One of the first

84 Levizja AntiSoros Per Shqiperine.
85 Vehbiu. "Çifutë and Jews."
86 Ibid.
87 "OSCE Chairpersonship," *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. osce.org/chairmanship. (Accessed October 10, 2020).

public events held by Albania in this new position was a high-level conference on countering antisemitism.[88] Albania is aware of its gaps in democratic processes, but it prides itself on being free of antisemitism and rescuing Jews during the Holocaust. Highlighting good relations with Israel, emphasizing the narrative of how Albanians saved Jews during the Holocaust, and showcasing Albania as a country free of antisemitism are seen as important parts of the country's European-integration process. With corruption and organized crime still major issues, an ongoing political crisis and high levels of political polarization, it would appear that one of the few things Albania can show is its history of interreligious tolerance and lack of antisemitism.

The rescue narrative, in which Albanians rescued Jews, highlights an episode of Albanian magnanimity. It shows that Albanians honor their promises and intend to do so when completing E.U. conditionality "homework" regarding the accession process.[89]

Conclusion

Albania prides itself on rescuing Jews during World War II and on the historical absence of antisemitism in the country. This was borne out by the media monitoring that showed antisemitism is only remotely and vaguely present in Albanian media. Albanian media did not generally promote antisemitic speech, but reported on events related to antisemitism, Jews, Israel, and the Middle East. Antisemitic narratives did not promote the objectives of a foreign state or non-state actors. However, the most prominent narratives were rhetoric and conspiracy theories regarding George Soros's role in influencing and even controlling political processes in Albania. The narrative portraying Soros as the mastermind of a "globalist" movement and a left-wing radical, who would undermine the established order has become part of mainstream Albanian political discourse. Antisemitic narratives were most commonly manifested in the online milieu, such as Facebook and news portals. However, this monitoring did not show that these antisemitic narratives are directly communicated towards Jews or the state of Israel in general.

Albania needs to ensure that it properly investigates, prosecutes, and punishes hate crimes. Even misdemeanors must be addressed, because these are often the best opportunities for early intervention. Albania should improve data collection for its crime statistics and make timely reports to the OSCE hate crime database. It should also train criminal justice officials to implement laws and practices regarding hate speech and be vigilant regarding the signs of imported extremism. These steps should be repeated continuously, as government officials and police officers move on and new cohorts continuously enter the system.

A wide spectrum of stakeholders needs to confront and condemn hate speech, particularly on social media, and be vigilant in countering antisemitic speech with alternative narratives. Media literacy and critical thinking of the younger generation need to be strengthened to counter antisemitic rhetoric and conspiracy narratives about Jewish power (such as the narrative of Soros aiming to destroy Albania). It is necessary to support civil

88 "Addressing Anti-Semitism Requires Co-ordinated and Inclusive Approach, Say Participants at High-Level Tirana Conference," *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, February 4, 2020. osce.org/chairmanship/445474.

89 Joseph Berger. "Casting Light on Little-Known Story of Albania Rescuing Jews From Nazis," *New York Times*, November 18, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/19/world/europe/casting-light-on-little-known-story-of-albania-rescuing-jews-from-nazis.html.

society organizations that use media platforms to raise awareness of the problem, debunk false theories, and advance strong and credible counter-narratives. Finally, reliable sources of information are essential to counter the spread of conspiracy theories and disinformation. Journalists should report responsibly, using verified sources, making sure not to reinforce conspiracy theories and antisemitic narratives. It is important to educate and train journalists on how to report these issues.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) form a small and marginal community. They are recognized as one of the seventeen nationalities included in the law on Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities and instances of antisemitism are rare. However, as a national minority, Jews in BiH cannot run for the presidency or the House of Peoples (one of the two chambers of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Though the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2009 that these exclusions put BiH in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, necessary reforms to the electoral system and constitution have yet to be implemented. The Jewish community faces a legal gap with respect to the restitution of communal property confiscated during World War II, and none of the 130 formerly Jewish-owned communal properties identified by the Jewish community have been returned or compensated for since 1995.

Media monitoring demonstrated that antisemitism was rarely discussed or even mentioned by online media in the country. The type of antisemitism most often mentioned by select online media was physical and in reference to the Holocaust. Antisemitism online appears mostly on days of Holocaust commemorations, or when the news media shows politicians at such events. A recurring topic within Holocaust



memorialization concerns how neighboring Croatia deals with the past, as well as criticisms that the country downplays crimes perpetrated by the Independent State of Croatia. The Holocaust was also often mentioned in reference to the war in BiH from 1992 to 1995 and compared with the Srebrenica genocide.

Antisemitic statements did not occur in the editorial content of the monitored news sources, but was present in comments sections of the same media as well as its Facebook pages. During the selected time peaks, researchers found 101 instances of antisemitic statements; 93 percent of them were present in under-article comments and Facebook comments. They were mostly allegations about a world Jewish conspiracy, as well as false statements and insults about Jews, most often in reference to actions by the state of Israel. Such instances of



antisemitism are worrying and remedial action should be taken to address them.

Historical Overview

Sephardi Jews played an important role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Sarajevo, from the 16th century onwards. Integrated into Bosnian Ottoman society, the Sephardim kept their language, faith, customs, and even some objects from Spain, such as the famous Sarajevo Haggadah.[106] They were joined by Ashkenazi Jews, who settled after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of the country in 1878.[107] The Ashkenazim were targets of antisemitism during the interwar period, as they were identified with Austro-Hungary which many saw as an occupier and colonizer. Bosnia and Herzegovina were part of the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia, during which the Jewish communities there entered a period of relative prosperity. At over 10 percent, Sarajevo had the highest proportion of Jews of all Yugoslav towns.[108] During World War II, Bosnia and Herzegovina were joined to the so-called Independent State of Croatia.[109] Its rulers, Croatian fascist Ustaša, deported to the Jasenovac concentration camp or killed ten thousand out of fourteen thousand Jews.[110] The others survived by joining the Partisans or fleeing to the Italian-held Adriatic coast.

After the war, many survivors left for Israel, further shrinking the community. Nevertheless, Jewish community life continued until Yugoslavia's dissolution and the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), when the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee evacuated 1,500 Bosnian Jews to Israel.[111] After the war, only a few hundred Jews remained in Bosnia, but their charitable organization *La Benevolencija* continued to

106 Donia. Sarajevo: Biografija Grada. p. 37.
107 Ibid.
108 Sekelj, Laslo. Antisemitizam u Jugoslaviji (1918–1945). Revija za Sociologiju, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1981, p. 182.
109 Ibid.
110 "Bosnia-Herzegovina," European Jewish Congress. eurojewcong.org/communities/bosnia-herzegovina.
111 Ibid.

provide aid. While there are no attacks or demonstrated hatred toward Jews, some antisemitic tropes were appropriated into contemporary nationalist narratives of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Serb nationalist narratives portray Serbs as equal to Jews because of their common victimhood at the hands of the Croatian Ustaša. Croatian nationalism downplays the role of Ustaša and their persecution of Jews. Finally, Bosniak nationalism also often flirts with so-called Holocaust envy, portraying Bosniaks as victims of Serb aggression in the same way as Jews were the victims of the Germans. Finally, concerning the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina after 1995, there was an emergence of imported radical Islamism along with its antisemitic tropes.

The Jewish Minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina Today

Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina form a small and marginal community. They mainly live in the capital, Sarajevo, but there are also communities in Mostar, Doboj, Banja Luka, Zenica and Tuzla.[112] The Sarajevo Jewish community is the most important and most active, with a Jewish Museum in the Old Synagogue and the headquarters of the Jewish charitable organization La Benevolencija, which provided humanitarian aid to civilians during the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1995).[113] Sarajevo is also known for the Sarajevo Haggadah, one of the oldest Sephardi Haggadah in the world. Originating in Barcelona around 1350 and kept in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it underscores the historically rich Jewish culture in the country. In recent years, Jewish synagogues reopened in Banja Luka and Doboj as relations between Republika Srpska and Israel developed.[114] Jews are recognized as one of the 17 nationalities protected by Article 3 of the Law on Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities (2003).[115] Incidents of antisemitism are rare; only two were reported to the OSCE in 2018, when antisemitic graffiti, including swastikas, were drawn on the entrances to apartment buildings in Tuzla and Sarajevo where members of the Jewish community live.[116] The Jewish community, together with the Islamic community, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, has the status of a "historically established," or traditional religious community.

The president of the Jewish community, Jakob Finci, has stated numerous times that Jewish people feel protected in BiH and there is no antisemitism.[117] In an interview with Deutsche Welle, he said that the reason is perhaps that the country's three main constituent peoples — Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks — are preoccupied with hating each other, so they "do not have time to hate the Jews."[118] The political climate has been permeated with ethno-national tensions and disagreements between the political representatives of the three main constituent peoples, while minorities have been largely marginalized. However, discourse on antisemitism has

112 Vukičević. *Jewish Communities in the Political and Legal of Post-Yugoslav Countries*.
113 Jevrejski glasnik. 2017. *Obnavljanje rada La Benevolencije i rat (1991–1996)*. Broj 17, p. 16, https://www.jews.ba/post/17/Jevrejska-dru%C5%A1tva-u-Sarajevu-(iz-istorije).
114 Vukičević. *Jewish Communities in the Political and Legal of Post-Yugoslav Countries*.
115 Law on Rights of National Minorities. Constitution of Bosnia and Herzigovina. Art. IV Item 4a. (2003). advokat-prnjavorac.com.
116 "2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Bosnia and Herzegovina. *U.S. Department of State*, state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/bosnia-and-herzegovina.
117 Zakon o slobodi vjere, čl. 8, st. 2; "Sarajevski Jevreji: BiH je za Nas Najsigurnije Mjesto u Evropi," *Al Jazeera Balkans*, July 20, 2017. balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/sarajevski-jevreji-bih-je-za-nas-najsigurnije-mjesto-u-evropi.
118 Shwajder, Maja. "Od Rada Nijedan Napad na Jevreje u BiH," *Deutsche Welle*, November 6, 2016. dw.com/bs/od-rata-nijedan-napad-na-jevreje-u-bih/a-36252954.

been appropriated within the current ethno-national narratives of Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats living in BiH. For instance, in Republika Srpska (one of the two BiH entities), the suffering of the Serbs during World War II is often compared to the suffering of the Jews during the same period, while the Croat ethno-national narrative downplays the role of the NDH and its persecution of Jews. Overall, in the general population and among political elites and in academia, there is a lack of in-depth understanding and discussion about antisemitism in the country, which is also reflected in media reports. Also, more research is needed to search for the presence of antisemitic narratives within the radical Islamic communities that exist mainly in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the other of the two BiH entities).

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

Article II of the constitution guarantees that the rights and freedoms provided in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its protocols are directly applicable in BiH, and that these acts take precedence over all laws.[119] BiH acceded to the Council of Europe on April 24, 2002, and ratified the European Convention on July 12, 2002.[120] Therefore, the European Convention is binding on two grounds: it is both part of the constitutional system and a binding international legal treaty. Prohibition of discrimination is guaranteed by the Constitution, Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Protocol 12 of the European Convention (which was ratified in 2003 and entered into force in April 2005) and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina (which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, national or social origin, and associations with national minorities), among others.[121]

However, in stipulating that Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats are constituent peoples, the constitution places their rights above those of other peoples, including Jews. It contains a discriminatory provision regarding the ability of minorities to participate in the government: they are marked as "others." Article IV of the Constitution stipulates that the Parliamentary Assembly consists of two houses: the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. The House of Peoples consists of 15 delegates, two-thirds of whom are from the Federation (including five Croats and five Bosniaks) and one-third from Republika Srpska (five Serbs).[122] Article V stipulates that the Presidency of

119 The constitution was adopted as part of the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, initialed on November 21, 1995, in Dayton, Ohio, and signed on December 14, 1995, in Paris. "Ustav Bosne i Hercegovine," Aneks IV Opšteg okvirnog sporazuma za mir u Bosni i Hercegovini, Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine, br. 25/2009, preambula, čl. 1, st. 3. ccbh.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_bos.pdf; the English version is available at: ccbh.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_engl.pdf.
Ustav BiH, čl. 2, st. 1-2.

120 "Chart of Signatures and Ratifications of Treaty 005," *Council of Europe*. coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/005/signatures?p_auth=stAKzUfM. (Accessed August 2, 2020).

121 Ustav BiH, čl. 2, st. 4; Zakon o zabrani diskriminacije ("Službeni glasnik BiH", broj 59/09); Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o zabrani diskriminacije ("Službeni glasnik BiH", broj 66/16), čl. 2, st. 1. Within this law, discrimination is any different treatment including any exclusion, restriction or preference based on real or presumed grounds toward any person or group of persons and those related to them on the basis of their race, skin color, language, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, national or social origin, affiliation with a national minority, political or other beliefs, property status, membership in a trade union or other association, education, social status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual characteristics, or any other circumstance that has the purpose or consequence of preventing or endangering any person's recognition, enjoyment or realization on an equal basis, rights and freedoms in all areas of life (Član 2, st. 1 Zakona o zabrani diskriminacije). http://ccbh.ba/public/down/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_engl.pdf.

122 Ustav BiH, čl. 4, st. 1.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is made up of three members: one Bosniak and one Croat, each elected directly from the territory of the Federation, and one Serb elected directly from Republika Srpska. These provisions discriminate against non-constituent peoples (that is, minorities), who make up approximately 3 percent of the population by precluding them from running for those offices.

In July and August 2006, representatives of Roma and Jewish national minorities, Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci, respectively, lodged separate appeals with the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that these provisions concerning the presidency, the House of Peoples, and vital national interest are discriminatory on the basis of race, religion and affiliation with a national minority. The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled on December 22, 2009, that the country had violated Protocol 12 and Article 14 of the European Convention.[123] The Assembly of the Council of Europe called for the urgent implementation of the court's decision, before the October 2010 elections. To date, this decision has not been implemented.[124]

The protection of national minorities, as well as the prohibition of discrimination, is further ensured by the provisions of criminal laws. The criminal code provides this protection by prohibiting the following criminal offenses: violating the equality of citizens; incitement of national, racial and religious hatred; discord and intolerance; and damage or demolition of religious buildings.[125] The Criminal Code of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina prohibits the incitement of religious hatred, discord and intolerance "by coercion, abuse, endangering security, exposing national, ethnic or religious symbols to mockery, damaging other people's symbols, desecrating monuments, memorials or graves," and carries a sentence of up to eight years.[126] The Criminal Code of Republika Srpska also criminalizes "public incitement and incitement to violence and hatred...directed against a certain person or group due to their national, racial, religious or ethnic affiliation, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, origin or other characteristics," and carries penalties ranging from fines to a three-year prison sentence.[127]

Hate speech is not explicitly defined within the criminal code, but can be prosecuted under ''incitement to hatred'' clauses. However, online hate speech is rarely prosecuted, and there is no consistent interpretation of terms such as "incitement," "inflammation," "hatred," "discord" and "hostility" among the judiciary.[128] Hate speech is particularly present in the

123 "Case of Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Application Nos. 27996/06 and 34836/06," *European Court of Human Rights*, December 22, 2009. hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"fulltext":["\"CASE%20OF%20SEJDIĆ%20AND%20FINCI%20v.%20BOSNIA%20AND%20HERZEGOVINA\""],"documentcollectionid2":["GRANDCHAMBER","CHAMBER"],"itemid":["001-96491"]}.

124 "Sejdić and Finci — After 10 Years of Absence of Progress, New Hopes for a Solution for the 2022 Elections," *Council of Europe*, 2019, https://www.coe.int/en/web/execution/-/sejdic-and-finci-after10-years-of-absence-of-progress-new-hopes-for-a-solution-for-the-2022-elections.

125 Krivični zakoni BiH, *Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine*, br. 3/03, 32/03, 37/03, 54/04, 61/04, 30/05, 53/06, 55/06, 8/10, 47/14, 22/15, 40/15 i 35/18, čl. 145; Krivični zakon BiH, 145a; Krivični zakon FBIH, *Službene novine Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine*, 36/03, 37/03, 21/04, 69/04, 18/05, 42/10, 42/11 i 59/14, čl. 163; Krivični zakon Republike Srpske, *Službeni glasnik Republike Srpske*, br. 64/17 i 104/18, čl. 139; Krivični zakon BiH, čl. 145 b. The English version of the Criminal Code can be accessed at https://www.imolin.org/doc/amlid/Bosnia_Herzegovina_Criminal%20Code.pdf#:~:text=(1)%20The%20criminal%20legislation%20of%20Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina,as%20well%20as%20the%20air%20space%20over%20them.

126 Krivični zakon FBiH, čl. 163, st. 2.

127 Krivični zakon RS, čl. 359; Krivični zakon RS, čl. 359, st. 1.

128 Filipović, Ljiljana. *Krivična Djela iz Mržnje i Krivična Djela Izazivanja Mržnje*. Sarajevo, Misija OSCE-a u BiH, pravosudje.ba/vstv/faces/pdfservlet;jsessionid=c03a12c9205060e64ddd231173cff2c66ff7fe4f90725d502ae-





Dervo Sejdić (left) and Jakob Finci (right).

comments sections of online media. In 2019, the Press Council of BiH received 444 complaints regarding hate speech, of which 422 pertained to the comments sections of some of the most popular online media sites in BiH.[129] The same year, the Sarajevo Open Center documented 104 instances of hate speech online, of which 100 pertained to comments on the online portal klix.ba, the most visited news portal in BiH.[130]

Another legal gap involves the lack of regulations covering the restitution of communal and private property confiscated from the population in BiH during World War II or nationalized by the Communist regime. Of the 130 formerly Jewish-owned communal properties identified by the Jewish community, none have been returned or compensated for since 1995.[131]

Finally, BiH has not adopted the Draft Law on the Prohibition of Denial of Genocide and War Crimes or amendments to criminal laws that prohibit the denial of genocide and war crimes. The decision not to adopt this law has been used as a political tool, particularly in relation to the wars of the 1990s, and both hatred and denial of war crimes have often been voiced by leading politicians in the country.

Institutional Mechanisms

Protection of rights and freedoms can be pursued through the regular courts or institutions dedicated to the protection of human rights: the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Constitutional Court. The former reviews violations, issues non-binding recommendations and indicates possible systemic violations of individual and/or collective rights in annual reports. The latter serves as an appellate court for alleged violations of individual and collective

ca59e8e6f6641.e34TbxyRbNiRb40Qa3yOaN0Rbh50?p_id_doc=54213.

129 Information obtained from the Press Council's website: vzs.ba/.

130 Monitoring of Sarajevo Open Center. Written correspondence, June 25, 2020.

131 "Bosnia and Herzegovina Operations," *World Jewish Restitution Organization*, wjro.org.il/our-work/restitution-by-country/bosnia-herzgovina/.

Legal Gaps in Legislation



Constitution places the rights of Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats over other minorities, including Jews



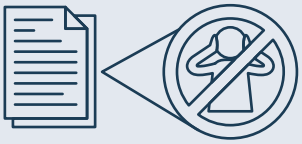
Constitution limits ability of minorities to participate in the government and marks them as 'others'



Online hate speech is rarely prosecuted; no consistent interpretation of terms defining hate speech



No regulations covering restitution of Jewish-owned property confiscated during WWII



No draft law on the Prohibition of Denial of Genocide and War Crimes or amendments to criminal laws that prohibit the denial of genocide and war crimes

rights of citizens and is the highest appellate court within the country's judicial system.

Freedom of religion is protected by provisions within criminal laws.[132] However, due to insufficient implementation of these laws and the marginalization of minorities in Bosnian society, attacks on religious buildings, cemeteries and the property of religious communities, as well as harassment of religious officials, still pose significant challenges for minority groups.[133] Religious groups reported continued discrimination in terms of denial of permits for the construction or repair of religious facilities and in education, employment and the provision of social services.[134] The Interreligious Council, an NGO made up of representatives of the country's four main religious communities, reiterated that the authorities are unacceptably slow when it comes to investigating and prosecuting religiously motivated crimes.

The country was accepted as an observer in the IHRA in 2016.[135] However, the police and the judiciary still do not systematically collect information on hate crimes, and there is a lack of standard education for the police and judiciary about these crimes, which is why they often go unnoticed and are not investigated or prosecuted.[136] The Ministry of Interior provides data to ODIHR on hate crimes, but an institutional system for recording and data collection has not been established. The last data provided to ODIHR is from 2015, when 24 hate crimes were recorded and 12 prosecuted.

132 Freedom of religion in BiH is also guaranteed by the BiH Constitution and entity constitutions, the European Convention, the Law on Freedom of Religion and the Legal Status of Churches and Religious Communities, adopted on January 28, 2004, and agreements between the state and the religious community.
133 "2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Bosnia and Herzegovina."
134 Ibid.
135 "Countries and Membership," *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, holocaustremembrance.com/about-us/countries-membership.
136 Blažević, Jožo. *Izvješće o Pojavama Govora Mržnje i Kaznenih Djela Učinjenih iz Mržnje u Bosni i Hercegovini u Razdoblju od Lipnja 2017. Godine do Lipnja 2018. Godine*. Sarajevo, Sarajevski Otvoreni Centar, soc.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/GOVOR-MRZNJE-i-ZLOCIN-IZ-MRZNJE-WEB.pdf.

However, this number is much lower compared to the previous year — when 200 hate crimes were recorded and 36 prosecuted — due to the introduction of a new data-reporting method. Other sources, such as the Sarajevo Open Center, the Center for Education and Research Nahla, the Islamic Community and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina also reported incidents of hate crimes.[137] In 2018, 71 incidents were reported by NGOs, including 23 instances of racism and xenophobia, two of discrimination against Roma and Sinti, two of antisemitism, 17 of bias against Muslims, 10 of bias against Christians and 20 against all other groups, including sexual minorities. The law enforcement response to these crimes has been very poor, and there are no witness-support or victim-support structures for hate crimes. There is also no systematic collection of data. Finally, the authorities haven't yet introduced any measures to improve low public awareness of the issue of hate crimes.

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

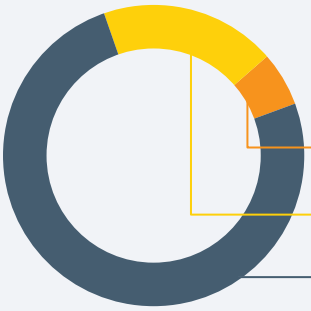
Media monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused on Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian sources in all three languages. Researchers worked with 1,493 relevant mentions.[138] Out of these, 87 contained antisemitic statements and 280 discussed instances of antisemitism. The rest of the relevant media pieces contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

Antisemitism was rarely discussed in the BiH online media. When it appeared, the type of antisemitism most often mentioned was **physical** and appeared mostly in reference to the Holocaust. In 1,493 articles and online discussions, researchers tagged 120 cases of Holocaust memorialization — most often in the form of reporting on Holocaust remembrance of Jewish victims or statements by foreign high-ranking politicians concerning the Holocaust[139] and how Croatia deals with the past and criticism that the country is downplaying crimes perpetrated by the NDH. The Holocaust also often appeared in reference to the 1992–1995 war in BiH.[140] Such comparisons were often present in communication of Srebrenica survivors. In March 2019, during the sentencing of the first president of Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadžić — who was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity during the 1992–1995 war in BiH — a banner comparing the Srebrenica genocide to the Holocaust and Karadžić to Adolf Hitler was set out in front of the International Criminal Tribune for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague.[141]

Within tagged instances of antisemitic **rhetoric**, **conspiracy** and **false** were the most common. Within discussed instances of antisemitism, the **denial** tag was present most often (47 tags). In eight cases, **denial**

137 "Bosnia and Herzegovina," *OSCE ODIHR Hate Crime Reporting*, hatecrime.osce.org/bosnia-and-herzegovina.
138 See section 3.4.
139 See, for example: "'Kamen Spoticanja': Nova Vizija Sjecanja na Holokaust," *Frontal.ba*, September 11, 2019. frontal.ba/novost/95501/kamen-spoticanja-nova-vizija-sjecanja-na-holokaust; "We Shall Meet Again: Last Letters from the Holocaust," *Dnevno.rs*, February 21, 2019. dnevno.rs/istorija/ovo-jednom-mora-da-se-zavrsi-nakon-vise-od-70-godina-objavljena-poslednja-pisma-zrtava-holokausta/; "Angela Markel Planira Prvu Posjetu Auschwitzu," *Depo*, 21 Nov. 2019, depo.ba/clanak/195639/angela-merkel-planira-prvu-posjetu-auschwitzu; "Van der Belen Povodom Ausvica: Osjecam Sramotu," *Face.ba*, January 27, 2020. face.ba/vijesti/svijet/van-der-belen-povodom-ausvica-osjecam-sramotu/40965; "Finci: Holokaust Najveca Mrlja na Savjesti Covjecanstva, Genocid Nazvati Pravim Imenom," *Face.ba*, January 26, 2020. face.ba/vijesti/bih/finci-holokaust-najveca-mrlja-na-savjesti-covjecanstva-genocid-nazvati-pravim-imenom/40732.
140 One hundred and nine times.
141 "Incident u Hagu: Policija Trazila da se Ukloni Transparent Poredenja Karadzica i Hitlera," March 20, 2019. glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Incident-u-Hagu-Policija-trazila-da-se-ukloni-transparent-poredjenja-Karadzica-i-Hitlera/280862.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 1,493 relevant media pieces:

- **5.8%** contained antisemitic statements
- **18.8%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **75.4%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

PHYSICAL | RHETORIC | SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



CONSPIRACY



FALSE



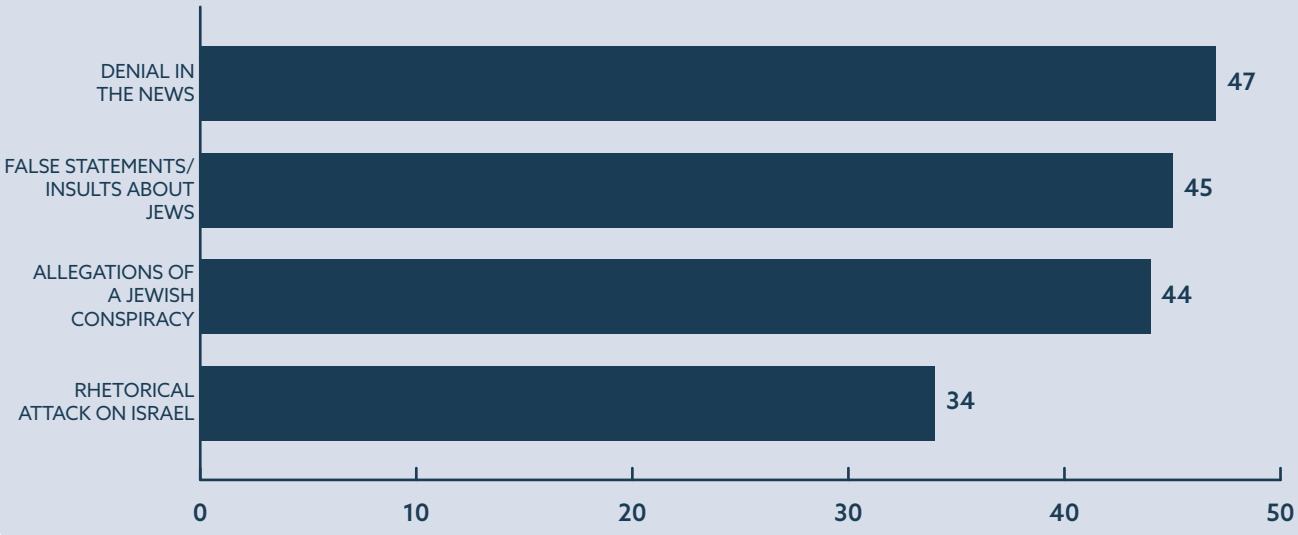
DENIAL

CONSPIRACY: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the power of Jews as a collective.

FALSE: Making an untrue statement or spreading disinformation about Jews or Jewish institutions.

DENIAL: Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people during WWII.

Most frequent mentions:



was also used in antisemitic statements. Other types of rhetorical instances, such as **conspiracy**, allegations and **accusations** about Jews controlling the world or **false** statements about Jews, were mostly found in the readers' sections of online media and Facebook as direct antisemitic instances. Coverage of Holocaust denial often related to the criticism of Croatian memory politics and the reluctance to admit the Croatian role in the crimes perpetrated against Jews during World War II.[142] Denial and the need to remember the Holocaust were also mentioned in statements by the Jewish community expressed on important dates, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.[143] **Property** tags were rare and appeared in relation to events outside the country, such as attacks on Jewish property in other countries — for example, the desecration of a Jewish cemetery that took place in February 2019 in France.[144] The media monitoring revealed that BiH online media followed the political situation in the Middle East and relations between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries, particularly the situation in the occupied territories and relations between Israel and Palestine. Most of these were followed by many anti-Zionist comments, many of which were also antisemitic.

Media monitoring did not discover any cases of antisemitic statements originating in **virtual forums**. However, antisemitic remarks by **public figures** were noted 15 times. For example, in February 2019, accusations of antisemitism within the UK Labour Party and its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, were noted, though without further elaboration.

During Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović's visit to Israel, BiH media also "reminded" the public, citing Israeli media, of her controversial statements about being a fan of the Croatian singer Marko Perković Thompson, who has often been accused of glorifying the Ustaša regime and its crimes, and her statements about how many Croats found freedom in Argentina after World War II, which has been interpreted as her support for the Ustašas who emigrated there.[145] Such reporting was often sensationalist and part of the ethno-national tensions between the three ethno-national groups.

Antisemitic Narratives

Within the context of persistent ethnic and national tensions between Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats that stymie the country's progress toward a fully democratic, functioning society, the topic of antisemitism was marginalized in the media. When it was discussed or mentioned in the media, it was often within domestic ethnic-national topics, part of discussion of relations with other states (such as Croatia) or related to Holocaust remembrance.

On Facebook and in article comments sections, on the other hand, antisemitic statements were found under different articles (such as those related to Israel, Trump or Holocaust remembrance). These were most often expressions of hatred toward the Jewish population based on

142 Okic, Raif. "Jasenovac: Vidi se Teror i Zlocin, Ali ne i Tko je Ubijao," *Buka*, February 20, 2019. 6yka.com/novosti/jasenovac-vidi-se-teror-i-zlocin-ali-ne-i-tko-je-ubijao.
143 Mikeš, Đorđe " Holokaust je dio najcrnje historije čovječanstva," *Avaz.ba*, January 25, 2020. avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/544431/holokaust-je-dio-najcrnje-historije-covjecanstva.
144 "Oko 80 Spomenika na Zidovskom Groblju Oskrnavljeno Antisemitskim Porukama," *Poskok.info*, February 20, 2019. poskok.info/oko-80-spomenika-na-zidovskom-groblju-oskrnavljeno-antisemitskim-porukama/.
145 The Croatian president's statements were problematized by historian Efraim Zuroff. "Direktor Centra Simon Wiesenthal Unisto Hrvatsku Predsjednicu: 'Kolinda Velica Ustase Ubili su 30 Hiljada Jevreja," *Slobodna Bosna*, July 31, 2019. slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/122450/direktor_centra_simon_wiesenthal_unistio_hrvatsku_predsjednicu_kolinda_velicha_ustase_ubili_su_30_hiljada_jevreja.html.

Israel's actions (the tag **AS-Israel** was used in this context 34 times) but some also targeted the local Jewish population. Allegations of a world Jewish **conspiracy** appeared 44 times (of which 33 were part of antisemitic statements) and **false** statements and insults about Jews were seen 45 times (of which 39 were part of antisemitic statements).

Instances of the use of the derogatory term "ćifut" were found, and Jews were described as cunning people, pests and lice ("vaške," "štetočine").[146] An article on Vijesti.ba, published on Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27), entitled "Holocaust the Biggest Stain in European History on the Conscience of Humankind" and accompanied by a picture of Jewish community president Jakob Finci, provoked numerous negative comments about Jews and the actions of Israel against Palestinians. A number of explicitly antisemitic statements were found on the Facebook account of *Vijesti.ba*, such as: "Get lost you Jewish scum! You are lamenting over the Holocaust. But you are doing it all the time to Palestinians." ("Marš djubre židovsko! Kukate na nti-Semi. A vi ga stalno provodite na Palestincima") and "Hitler spent so much gas on you and again you learned nothing!" ("Potrošio Hitler toliko plina na vas I opet ništa niste naučili!").[147]

In the **first time peak** — February 2019 — the most common topics related to antisemitism and Israel in the BiH media were, for example, the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in France and the tensions between Poland and Israel due to the Israeli prime minister's statement that the Polish nation participated in the Holocaust.[148]

During this peak, an article about the dispersal of war pensions to Belgians who served in the Waffen SS during World War II was published on *Slobodna Bosna* and provoked negative comments and antisemitic statements on the site's Facebook account. One such comment under the article reads: "When the Jews who have been killing Palestinians for more than 80 years are not ashamed, why should they [Belgians who served in the Waffen SS] be ashamed. They wanted to save the world from a LICE called a Jew" ("Kada se ne stide jevreji što ubijaju palestince više od 80 godina, zašto bi se oni stidjeli. Oni su htjeli da spase svijet od VAŠKE zvane jevrej").[149]

In the **second time peak** — March 2019 — monitored media reported on the sentencing of Karadžić, on the banner comparing the genocide in Srebrenica with the Holocaust that was set in front of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and on statements from the E.U. and Germany about disputed Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.[150] During this peak, an article about the need to rename Sarajevo streets with the names of those who liberated Sarajevo during World War II provoked antisemitic statements and insults toward local Jews. They were called traitors who escaped from the siege of Sarajevo, and commentors said they would have the right to name the streets of Sarajevo once they returned disputed territories to Palestine.[151]

146 This is a derogatory name for Jews, used to describe a stingy person.
147 Vijesti.ba. *Facebook*, facebook.com/Vijesti.ba/posts/2668456303190231?comment_id=2669274609775067.
148 See example: the article on the cancellation of the trip to Israel by the Polish prime minister due to Benjamin Netanyahu's statement on mojportal (February 18, 2019): mojportal.ba/2019/02/18/poljski-premijer-otkazao-put-u-izrael-zbog-izjave-netanyahua/.
149 The post is available here: https://www.facebook.com/SlobodnaBosna/posts/2237358679620068.
150 See the statement of Germany about Golan published on *atvbl* on March 22, 2019. https://www.atvbl.com/vijesti/svijet/golanska-visoravan-je-sirijska-teritorija-22-3-2019.
151 See the discussion: https://www.facebook.com/197321666957123/posts/2237358679620068.

Peaks in Media Monitoring



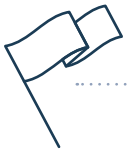


1 FEBRUARY 2019

A Jewish cemetery in France was desecrated.

Heightened tensions between Poland and Israel due to the Israeli prime minister's statement that the Polish nation participated in the Holocaust.



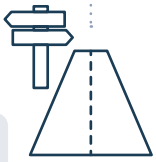


2 MARCH 2019

A banner comparing the genocide in Srebrenica with the Holocaust was seen during the sentencing of Karadžić.

Statements were made by the E.U. and Germany about disputed Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Article about renaming Sarajevo streets with the names of those who liberated Sarajevo during WWII provoked antisemitic statements.





3 MAY 2019

Norwegian philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen voiced concerns about the denial of genocide in BiH.

4 JULY-AUGUST 2019

Croatian president visited Israel and discussed Croatia's plans for the commemoration of the Holocaust. She allegedly referenced the danger of militant Islamism in BiH and drew criticism from BiH politicians.







5 EARLY NOVEMBER 2020

Israeli bombardments of Gaza.

Antisemitic statements related to trivial events, such as football games.



6 LATE NOVEMBER 2020

Dedications to International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In the **third time peak** — May 2019 — the monitored media reported on Norwegian philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen's statements while addressing a session of the Association of Independent Intellectuals "Krug 99" in Sarajevo. He stated that three genocides in the 20th century — the Holocaust, BiH and Rwanda — were preceded by phases of ideology, propaganda and planning, and expressed his concerns about the denial of genocide in BiH (antisemitism was mentioned).[152]

In the **fourth time peak** — July–August 2019 — a lot of media space was devoted to the Croatian president's visit to Israel, her discussions with Israeli leadership about Croatian's plans for commemorating the Holocaust, and her alleged reference to the danger of militant Islamism in BiH.[153] The reference was reported by the media in a sensationalist manner, provoking discussions on social media platforms about ethnic nationalism, Croatia's dealing with the heritage of World War II and criticism of the Croat president's statements by BiH politicians.

In the **fifth time peak** — early November 2020 — the media reported on the Israeli bombardments of Gaza.[154] Antisemitic statements were sometimes related to more trivial events, such as football games. In this peak, for example, an article reported about a Euro 2020 football match between Israel and Poland, and a commentator on the Facebook account of the online media site *Faktor.ba* wrote, "How come that Israel — ćifuts[155] are in Europe" ("Odakle Izrael-čifuti u Evropi").[156]

In the **sixth time peak** — late November 2020 — most mentions were dedicated to International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Recreated Facebook post of an antisemitic statement made on an article about a 2020 football match.



Countries Mentioned and Sources

The media that published the largest number of articles mentioning or discussing antisemitism in the selected time peaks were the online portal *Face.ba* (the portal of the commercial television station Face TV), the portal of the regional *Al Jazeera Balkans*, and the commercial online news portal *Slobodna-bosna.ba*. Most of the sources

152 The Norwegian scholar gave a speech at the session of the Association of Independent Intellectuals Krug 99 in Sarajevo, see Focus.ba May 19, 2019. https://www.fokus.ba/vijesti/bih/vetlsen-zabrinut-sam-za-buducnost-bih-posebno-zbog-negiranja-genocida/1463742/.
153 See example: Dnevnik.ba, July 30, 2019. https://www.dnevnik.ba/vijesti/grabar-kitarovic-bih-je-nestabilna-zemlja-pod-kontrolom-militantnog-islama.
154 See example: Factor.ba, November 16, 2020. Report from Anadolu News Agency. https://www.faktor.ba/vijest/izraelske-snage-ponovo-bombardovale-gazu/59051.
155 Slang term used in reference to Jews; used here to connote a derogotary meaning.
156 The post is available here: https://www.facebook.com/faktor.ba/posts/2641913105874322?comment_id=2646012635464369.

that mentioned antisemitism were related to occurrences in foreign countries, such as Croatia, Germany and Poland, and those that mentioned antisemitism within the local context were rare. In many instances, antisemitism was not the main topic of the selected articles, but was mentioned within the context of international news regarding politics, international relations, the statements of high-ranking politicians and their visits or commemorations of certain events. Articles that mentioned or discussed antisemitism were usually short reports, many taken from foreign sources, private agencies or other media. BiH journalists rarely researched and discussed the position of Jews or analyzed instances of antisemitism and their implications in depth.

Explicitly antisemitic statements were mostly found on the Facebook accounts of the news portal of the daily newspapers *Dnevni avaz*, *Slobodna Bosna* and *Vijesti.ba*, and in the comments sections of the news portal *Klix.ba* and the portal *Logično-net*.[157] Antisemitic statements did not occur in the editorial content of the monitored media but were present in the comments sections and the media's Facebook accounts. In total, around 100 written instances of antisemitism were found in the comments sections during the selected time peaks (50 **explicit** and 51 **implicit**) and many more were later tracked directly in the comments sections under selected articles.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

Antisemitism was not present in the editorial content of the monitored BiH media and the media did not report on antisemitism in the country. Instances of antisemitism were most often reported as part of international news, statements of politicians or Holocaust remembrance. Antisemitism was also often mentioned in the media in relation to Croatia's memory politics, often placed within the political context and even appropriated within Bosniak memory politics and parallels between the genocides of Jews and Muslims. There were no in-depth reports about the position of Jews in either the country or the region, and no investigations into the existence of antisemitism in BiH. Though it is a popularly held belief that there is no antisemitism in BiH, monitoring results showed that antisemitism was present, particularly expressed as hatred toward Jews for the actions of the state of Israel against Palestinians. This narrative was often manifested in comments sections on Facebook and online media under different articles related to Israel, Holocaust remembrance or foreign affairs. These sources repeated the notion that Jews are evil and cunning and deserved the Holocaust because of the current actions of Israel toward Palestinians. This narrative was mostly expressed by the Bosniak/Muslim community. The narrative reflected prevailing ethnic national narratives and the notion of collective responsibility for the actions of individuals or a state.

The narrative usually targets Jews as a whole, but instances were found where it was directed towards the local Jewish population and its representative, Jakob Finci. Though hate speech is subject to prosecution, representatives of the online media did not remove instances of antisemitism flagged by researchers.[158]

Antisemitic instances found in the monitored online sphere point to a worrying trend — holding Jews, in general, responsible for the actions of Israel. In the

157 It is an anonymous portal that does not publish full names of authors. The fact-checking platform Raskrinkavanje has reported that it spreads disinformation and fake news.
158 The researcher tagged 18 articles with the "flag" tag for apparent hate speech. These instances occurred on Facebook accounts of both professional and non-professional media.

context of BiH, this can engender hatred toward the local Jewish community and further marginalize it. The parallels between the Holocaust and the genocide of Muslims during the 1992–1995 war can further exacerbate tensions between ethnic groups, while sensationalist and superficial coverage of Croatia's efforts to deal with the past could raise regional political tensions. BiH media need to do more in-depth reporting on antisemitism, the position of the Jews in the country and events in the Middle East — which would be educational and increase the understanding of antisemitism among the population in the country.

Conclusion

The monitoring results showed that antisemitism was present among the population — particularly in the form of expressing hatred toward local Jews, and Jews in general, for the actions of Israel against Palestinians. This narrative was often manifested in the comments sections of Facebook accounts and online media under different articles related to Israel, Holocaust remembrance or foreign affairs. The amount and severity of these antisemitic instances and hate speech against Jews were worrying and actions should be taken to address them.

Representatives of online media should adopt moderation rules for their comments sections, systematically remove instances of antisemitism and hate speech from the discussion sections, and report extreme cases to the police. The prosecutors' offices should open investigations into cases of hate speech in online media and platforms, particularly of extreme and reoccurring examples. Law enforcement bodies, including prosecutors and the judiciary, should be trained and empowered to process online hate speech.

The topic of antisemitism in the BiH media is marginalized within the context of constant ethnic tensions between Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, which halt BiH's progress toward a fully democratic and functioning society. Antisemitism in online media was often appropriated within these discussions and those regarding relations with other states (such as Croatia).

Articles that mentioned or discussed antisemitism in the monitored online media were usually short reports, many taken from foreign sources, private agencies, or other media. BiH journalists rarely researched and discussed the position of Jews or analyzed instances of antisemitism and their implications in depth.

Media representatives in BiH should be sensitized to diversity and marginalized groups in their formal and practical education, drawing on insights from examples of crimes incited through hate speech, and the media and should conduct in-depth research about the position of Jews in the country and the existence of antisemitism. They should publish content on antisemitism that demonstrates a holistic approach and seeks to inform readers. More research is needed to analyze BiH media reporting on events in the Middle East, especially the sources of these reports and how they influence the public perception of Jews, because most hate speech toward Jews found in the comments sections were reactions to media reports about the Middle East and the role of Israel.

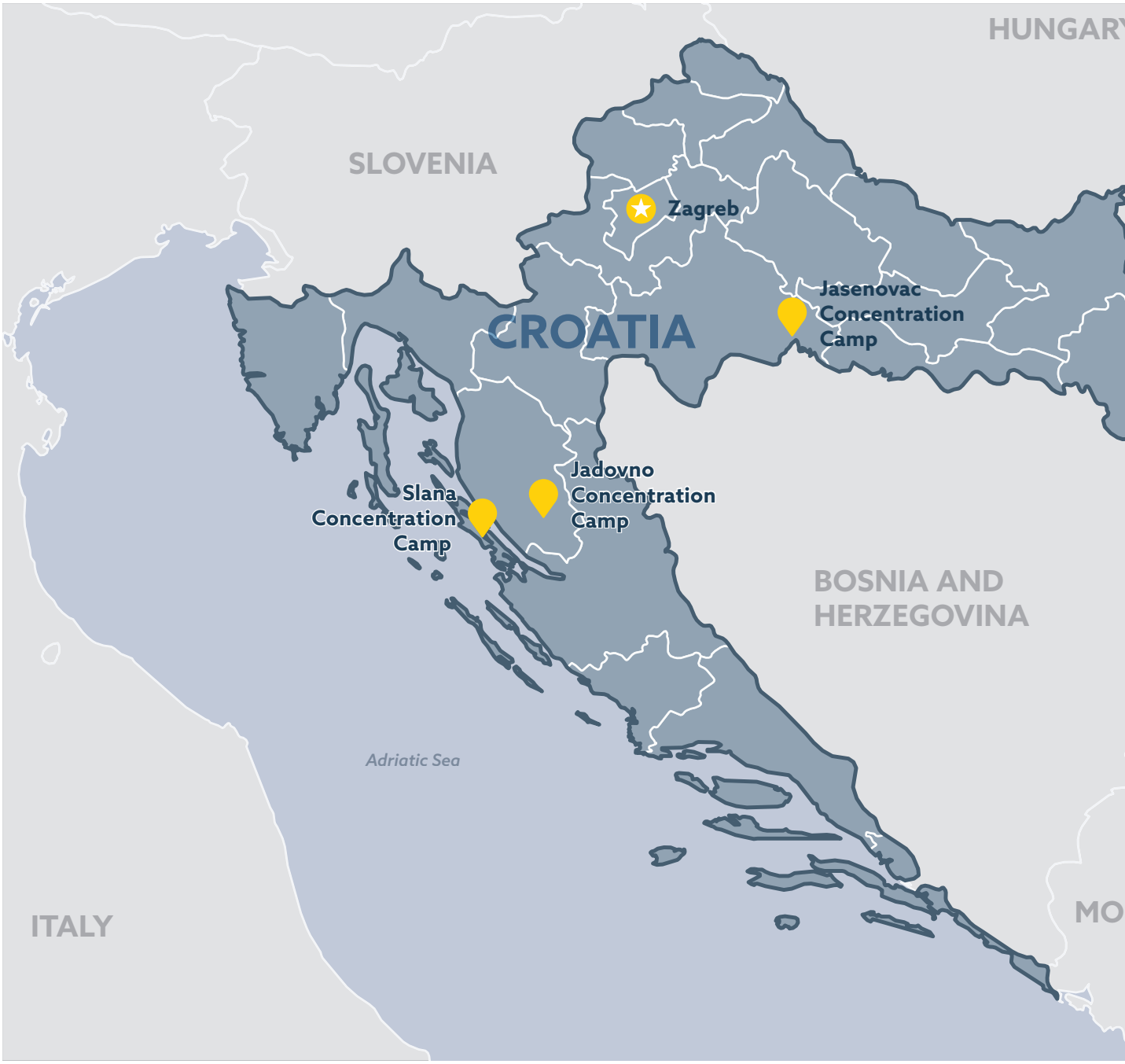
Croatia

Croatia is still trying to cope with the problematic legacy of World War II. The Ustaša regime that was in power during the war was responsible for the mass deportation and killing of Jews, Serbs and Roma, among others. The symbol of this Ustaša terror was the Jasenovac concentration camp. After independence in the 1990s, the new Croatian state condemned the Ustaša regime. Despite this, some of that regime's symbols still commonly occur, as is the case with the Ustaša salute and insignia marked with "za dom spremni"[167] ("for homeland ready") controversy. While the legal framework, including the constitution, criminal code and other laws, is designed to fight discrimination and hate crimes, including antisemitism and xenophobia, there are legal gaps regarding hate speech and contentious symbols due to the lack of a standardized juridical approach.

Physical manifestations of antisemitism in Croatia are not significant, according to the latest crime statistics and the last ombudsman's report from 2020.[168] However, so-called casual antisemitic biases and prejudices — for instance, ascribing cunning behavior to Jews when it comes to money

167 "Za dom spremni" was the Ustaša equivalent of the Nazi "Sieg Heil" salute" and it has been used as a cheer from Croatian audience members at a soccer match against an Israel team. Rosensaft, Menachem Z. "Croatia's Fascist Movement is on the rise yet again," World Jewish Congress, June 25, 2020. https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/croatias-fascist-movement-is-on-the-rise-yet-again-6-4-2020.

168 "Croatia," OSCE ODIHR Hate Crime Reporting, 2019, hatecrime.osce.org/croatia. For more updated crime statistics for 2019 and the first half of 2020, see: "Suzbijanje Zlocina iz Mrznje." Vlada Republike Hrvatske, 2019, ljudskaprava.gov.hr/suzbijanje-zlocina-iz-mrznje/602.



and business — can be found in various online comments and discussions. These biases, however, are amplified by the rise of global conspiracy theories about the so-called "Jewish lobby." This narrative generally holds that Jews, and those powerful political and financial figures they allegedly control, are responsible for various global crises and ills — whether those crises are financial, political (as in the Middle East) or the global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, primary antisemitic narratives within the country's online media are mostly imported and focus on, among other things: the politics of the state of Israel, clashes with the Palestinians and tensions in the Middle East in general, as well as all other narratives about Jewish or Zionist conspiracies, often using the symbol of Soros as a leader, such as political-financial conspiracies, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 health crisis. These



have encouraged a proliferation of various antisemitic commentaries and conspiracy-oriented biases about Jews, mixing them as well with particular domestic and historical context.

Country-specific antisemitic narratives are related to historical memory. The government promotes historical memorialization and Holocaust remembrance through various commemorative activities and educational curricula, while inadequately and ambiguously addressing controversial issues surrounding Ustaša symbols and historical revisionism.

The current research demonstrates a need for more large-scale online media monitoring of domestic manifestations of antisemitism. This should include monitoring specific and nuanced country-related keywords and tags, particularly implicit ones, that should be separated from general antisemitic tags in order to provide a more in-depth analysis of the origins and proliferation of domestic antisemitic narratives vs. imported antisemitic narratives.

Combating antisemitism should also involve paying more attention to identifying sources that might be deliberately disseminating antisemitic content. Other than that, the focus should be on the curriculum related to civic education for democracy and on legal protections aimed at withstanding historical revisionism. The government's educational programs regarding teaching about the Holocaust has been developing well during the last couple of decades.[169] Since 2005, more than 700 teachers have attended and participated in workshops and symposiums about the Holocaust. Furthermore, Croatia has been following and integrating IHRA recommendations for teaching about the Holocaust in schools.[170] In that respect, the educational program is well structured and

169 As a concept in the history curriculum for high schools, "the Holocaust" appears in 2000. Miletić, Loranda. *Poučavanje o holokaustu u Republici Hrvatskoj i suradnja s međunarodnim organizacijama*. Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje, 2012, azoo.hr/programi-arhiva/dravni-struni-skup-pouavanje-i-uenje-o-holokaustu-i-spreavanju-zloina-protiv-ovjenosti/.

170 "Preporuke za Poducavanje i Ucenje o Holokaustu," *Republika Hrvatska*, January 22, 2020, azoo.hr/programi-arhiva/dravni-struni-skup-pouavanje-i-uenje-o-holokaustu-i-spreavanju-zloina-protiv-ovjenosti/.

organized. However, there is ample room to support extracurricular activities like school excursions to the concentration camp Jasenovac, or even to museums abroad. Educating to build a democratic, plural, and decent society is needed in order to fight inherited prejudices, develop the culture of dialogue, cultivate democratic values, and tackle socially unacceptable behavior (hate speech and name-calling, hate symbols, and various identity-motivated or ideologically motivated extremisms, among others). Additional ways of combating antisemitism must include online campaigns that focus on advancing civic dialogue, fighting prejudices and intolerance.

Moreover, the existing legal framework should be improved, as it does not explicitly target historical revisionism related to the Ustaša regime or Holocaust denial. While Holocaust denial is generally condemned in political and public discourse, there are attempts to relativize or deny the character and scope of the Ustaša regime and its antisemitic laws. For the Jewish community, these laws, followed by systematic persecutions and extermination, marked the beginning of the Holocaust.[171] Finally, the politics of memory should be developed. Public debates and documentaries about the Ustaša regime and the so-called "ustašization" of society should be unambiguously presented on the Croatian public television station HRT (Hrvatska radiotelevizija). For example, while various documentaries and discussions cover the post-World War II Communist atrocities can often be found, this is not the case with the portrayal of the Ustaša regime. The government should sponsor such content like it does when it comes to other political and historical narratives. The politics of memory should also fight any attempts at relativization and "ustašization" via symbols and phenomena that are directed against certain citizens or minority groups — namely language and expressions that remind people of the Ustaša regime's antisemitic politics. The issue of symbols became one of the largest areas of contention largely because the legal framework is ambiguous and open to interpretation, leaning on government-given recommendations and ill-defined institutional practice. Crafting a new legal framework that will deal with the public use of contested symbols, especially those that can be in any way linked to the era of fascism, antisemitism and the Ustaša regime, is thus recommended. As for long-term goals, a national museum confronting Croatia's totalitarian past would also be highly recommended.

Historical Overview

Jewish presence along the Adriatic coast and the capital Zagreb dates back to medieval times, but mass Jewish settlement in Croatia took place only in the 19th century when Ashkenazi Jews from other parts of the Habsburg Empires were allowed to move to and reside in Croatia.[172] In addition to the old Christian anti-Jewish stereotypes, the preponderance of Jews in trade and free professions gave rise to

171 "Kratka povijest Židova u Hrvatskoj," *Bet Israel*, January 22, 2020, bet-israel.com/povijest/kratka-povijest-zidovskog-naroda/kratka-povijest-zidova-u-hrvatskoj/.

172 It should be noted that Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time, so these legislative steps reflected the larger political situation and social tendencies. Namely, even though enacting religious and civil laws was part of the Croatian autonomy within the monarchy, such processes had to be approved by Hungarian authorities. Thus, drafting this Jewish equality law became part of political tensions between the Hungarian rulers and local Croatian representatives, as the draft of such a law provided by Dragutin Pust, a representative of the larger Jewish community, was accepted by the majority of Croatian representatives. As a part of larger liberal tendencies toward equality of religion and freedom of consciousness, this law granted Jews equality in religious and other political and civil rights, and dethroned the Catholic Church from its privileged position in society. Dobrovšak, Ljiljana. Emancipacija Židova u Kraljevini Hrvatskoj, Slavoniji i Dalmaciji u 19. stoljeću. *Radovi – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest*, 2005. p. 138–139.

new ideological antisemitism among those who fought for independent Croatia and identified Jews with foreign (German and Hungarian) rule.[173] At the same time, some assimilated Jews joined the ranks of the Croatian independentists (Croatian Party of Right or Rightists). In contrast, others embraced and celebrated the Croatian language and culture, with the Jewish population steadily growing until the 1930s.

The Yugoslav state in the interwar period saw Jews prosper and undergo full emancipation. However, Croatian independentists and nationalists became further radicalized. In the 1930s, part of them rebelled and then fled abroad. They called themselves Ustaša (rebels) and allied politically with Italian fascists and German National socialists while embracing the antisemitism of the latter.[174] In addition, Ustaša blamed Jews for their alleged links with the Yugoslav royal family and the government. When Yugoslavia was invaded and partitioned in 1941, Hitler and Mussolini agreed to create an independent Croatian state under the fascist Ustaša leadership. The Ustaša immediately enacted racial laws targeting Serbs, Jews, and Roma. These were followed by policies of expulsion, extermination, and conversions. An estimated thirty thousand Jews or around 80% of the community were killed by the Ustaša or died when deported to Ustaša or Nazi concentration camps.[175] A smaller number of Jews were spared as so-called "honorary Aryans," a category devised by the Ustaša for some Jews they deemed sufficiently Croatian. Others escaped to Italian-controlled territories or joined the Partisan forces. The Catholic Church's attitude in Croatia towards the Ustaša and the Independent State of Croatia is still a matter of fierce debate among historians, politicians, and the general public both in Croatia and Serbia.[176] At the end of the war, the victorious Partisan forces executed tens of thousands of members of Ustaša formations and many others that they associated with the Ustaša.

What the Ustaša movement had in common with other pre-World War II fascist movements was the **cult of violence**; anything was allowed if it was aimed at Croatian independence.

After the war, half of the Jewish survivors in Croatia joined the Aliyah like in the rest of Yugoslavia. Jewish communities survived

173 Artuković, Mato. 2010. Ante Starčević i Židovi prema pisanju lista Sloboda, Časopis za suvremenu povijest, Vol. 42, No. 2. p. 485.

174 Crljen, Danjel. "Načela Hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta," (1942). It should be noted that the word "ustasha" in Croatian meant someone both subversive from one perspective (from the standpoint of a ruling regime), as well as a defensive from other perspective (from the standpoint of certain values), as it originates etymologically from the word "ustanak" which means "uprising". The manifesto can be accessed in full at: https://archive.org/details/nacela_hrvatskog_ustaskog_pokreta_1942-danijel_crljen/mode/2up.

175 The Ustaša-managed concentration camps in the NDH should be distinguished from those operated by Nazis and Italian Fascists. The largest Gestapo-managed camp was Judenlager Semlin in Zemun (in today's Serbia). There were about 20 Italian-led camps (Kampor on the island Rab was the largest), mostly used for confining Jewish, Croatian, or Slovenian citizens. The Ustaša had many concentration camps. Jasenovac, Jadovno and Pag were known as death camps, regardless of the fact that they were also labor camps. There were other camps as well in Đakovo, Gospić, and Lepoglava. Jasenovac was the largest complex, having within its vicinity around six different camps *Koncentracijski logori u Hrvatskoj*, Balkan War History. "Concentration Camp in Yugoslavia during World War II," December 9, 2017. http://www.balkanwarhistory.com/2017/12/concentration-camp-in-yugoslavia-during.html.

176 Tomasevich, Jozo. *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration*, 2002. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002); Biondich, Mark. "Controversies Surrounding the Catholic Church in Wartime Croatia, 1941-45," *The Independent State of Croatia*, (Routledge, 2007). pp. 31-59; Phayer, Michael. *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000). pp. 32, 85, 86; Esther Gitman. A Question of Judgement: Dr. Alojzije Stepinac and the Jews, Review of Croatian History, Vol. II, No. 1, 2006. https://hrcak.srce.hr/review-of-croatian-history; Ivo Goldstein, Katolička crkva u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj, https://radiogornjigrad.wordpress.com/2014/03/22/ivo-goldstein-katolicka-crkva-u-nezavisnoj-drzavi-hrvatskoj/.



President of Croatia from 1990-1999, Franjo Tuđman.

Reinstein, Mark. March 16, 1995.

in several places in Croatia, running among others a Jewish old age home in Zagreb and a summer resort for Yugoslavia's Jewish youth at the coast.
In the late 1980s, the movement for Croatian independence from Yugoslavia led by the former Yugoslav general Franjo Tuđman gained strength in response to the Republic of Serbia's aggressive leadership by Slobodan Milošević.
In 1991, the Republic of Croatia declared independence, which contributed to a rebellion of Croatian Serbs, supported by the Yugoslav Army and then Serbia, who opposed Croatian secession from Yugoslavia. In 1995, Croatia emerged victorious, and half of its Serbian population was exiled. During this period, there was much controversy about the alleged antisemitism of Croatian independentists and especially their leader Tuđman, who was recorded making antisemitic comments.[177] At the same time, the Yugoslav secret service allegedly mounted an attack on Jewish landmarks in Zagreb in 1991 in order to blame it on new Croatian authorities. Thereafter, there were no major incidents, and in places like Zagreb, Jewish life is still vibrant, with more than five hundred Jews recorded in 2001. Nevertheless, for the last thirty years distancing from the Ustaša and their symbols has remained a problem in Croatian society and an especially painful issue for its Jewish community, which embraced Croatian independence. In 2005, Croatia's biggest Jewish community in Zagreb underwent a rift, which resulted in the formation of a splinter community, Bet Israel.

The Jewish Minority in Croatia Today

The Jewish minority became active in newly independent Croatia, and has a specifically elected representative in the Croatian parliament from the minority quota of MPs. Also, the Jewish minority has various social, cultural, and religious organizations that preserve Jewish socio-political life, culture, language, religion, etc. The renewed Jewish community in Zagreb was joined by many other municipalities in establishing the Coordination of Jewish Municipalities of Croatia in 1995, with Ognjen Kraus as its president. Today there are many Jewish associations and prominent Jewish intellectuals in Croatia, actively participating in Croatian social, cultural, religious and political life, often acting as a bulwark against possible antisemitic sentiments. It is estimated that there are about 1,700 members of the Jewish minority living in Croatia today.

According to the 2019 ombudsman's report that leans on the Eurobarometer poll, 17 percent fewer people felt discriminated against in Croatia compared to 2015, yet 22 percent of people expressed prejudices about Jews when it came to personal relationships.[178] The report mentioned a case concerning threats against members

177 It was claimed that this statement was directed against the Yugoslav communist system. In this interview Tuđman said: "All sorts of other lies are being spread today, I do not know what else they will invent. I've heard that I'm of Jewish descent, but I found, I knew of my ancestors in Zagorje from around 350 years ago, and I said, maybe it would be good to have some of that, I guess I would be richer, I might not have become a Communist. Then, as if that's not enough, then they declare that my wife is Jewish or Serbian. Luckily for me, she never was either, although many wives are. And so on and so forth spreading lies." Ante Nazor (26 January 2013). "Laž je da Tuđman 'izbacio' Srbe iz Ustava" [The lie is that Tuđman 'banned' Serbs from the Constitution] (in Croatian), January 26, 2013. Dnevno.hr.

178 Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Croatia. "Report for the Ombudsman of 2019," March 2020, pp.

of the Jewish community that ended with the court letting the defendants off with a warning. The report found that such a sentence does not act as a deterrent for hate crimes. The report shows the improvement in the legal framework from the beginning of 2020 regarding the right to a paid day off for religious holidays for religious minorities. Accordingly, in addition to standard non-working Christian holidays, the implementation of the new law allows members of the Jewish community (and, of course, members of other religious minorities) to choose one day out of the days understood to be their major holidays to be a paid day off. Finally, the report cites instances of hate speech directed against Jews — especially online, but also incidents involving graffiti or property damage — but also omissions by the media and its failure to raise the issue of Ustaša crimes.

There were also reactions and complaints to the conclusions made in the 2018 Dialogue Document.[179] While its purpose was to provide recommendations for dealing with symbols and salutes, the document itself remained controversial. First, by not mentioning NDH concentration camps, namely Jasenovac, as a symbol of state-sponsored terror particularly against Jews, Serbs and Roma; and second, by claiming that the public use of the "Za dom spremni" salute though "contravening the Constitution," can be used for commemorative purposes in homage to soldiers who died "under that insignia" in the Homeland War. Such recommendations furthered social and political divisions and the politicization of memory. On one hand, the document precisely referred to crimes related to communist retaliation against the defeated Ustaša army and other members of the NDH regime, as well as the repressive character of communist rule exemplified by its detention centers, such as the Goli otok prison camp. On the other hand, it failed to explicitly mention and denounce Jasenovac as the most symbolic expression of the Ustaša regime's antisemitism. In that sense, "the Document not only fails in its opportunity to seriously confront Croatian society with its difficult past, except only in a declaratory fashion and in general terms, but also leaves an aura of revisionism in the air. It does not mean that the Document denies these horrors, but at the very least, if not



Jasenovac Monument devoted to the victims to Jasenovac concentration camp, Croatia. Recent graffiti removal can be seen on the right side of the monument.

Bern Bartsch, own work (2009). CC BY-SA 3.0

9-10. https://www.ombudsman.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Izvješće-pučke-pravobraniteljice-za-2019.pdf.

179 The *Dialogue Document* (2018) is the document crafted by the *Council for Dealing with the Consequences of Undemocratic Regimes* formed by the government in 2017 as an advisory council made of various experts from the fields of law, history and political science to provide a document with recommendations for legal regulation of the use of disputed symbols and insignia in the public, as it is seen from its subtitle: *Postulates and Recommendations – On Specific Normative Regulation of Symbols, Emblems and other Insignia of Totalitarian Regimes and Movements*. It is imagined to be a frame for the government's memory politics in general, since it aims to provide a narrative about Croatian totalitarian traumas, but more importantly "the *Dialogue Document* is the first document in Croatia aiming to offer comprehensive recommendations for political decision-making and law-framing regarding controversial past regimes and symbols" (Cvijanović, 2018: 111).

deliberately, it willy-nilly reboots collective memory by allowing for their absence."[180] As such, it is a document with a political agenda that also reflects the discrepancy between official discourse regarding condemnation of the Ustaša's legacy and the official tolerance of some aspects of that legacy, especially when it comes to the abovementioned controversial salute or naming streets. This was clearly visible in 2017 when former President Grabar-Kitarović claimed in a TV interview that "Ready for the Homeland" is not an Ustaša, but the old Croatian salute, a claim that was ironically refuted by right-wing politician Zlatko Hasanbegović, who openly admitted that it is "the Ustaša salute and this is why it is burden" but argued for an exception for its usage "when it is inside the coat of arms of the HOS (Croatian Defense Forces/Hrvatske obrambene snage) under which that unit fought in the Homeland War."[181] Although this salute was unconstitutional from the very beginning, tolerance for it shows that the legal provisions are not necessarily an obstacle to various attempts to revive certain aspects of the Ustaša legacy. This issue, regardless of the argument that the insignia and salute gained new meaning during the 1991 Homeland War, has not been the only one that can be singled out; the same pattern can be seen in previous attempts to rehabilitate certain dates, like the date of the NDH's founding, as well as attempts to name streets after certain Ustaša figures. Hence, the Dialogue Document is a reflection of inconsistent memory politics in Croatia emphasizing the narrative of Croat victimhood, and not the narrative of Ustaša perpetrators.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

Croatia is a signatory to all relevant international documents and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and other OSCE documents relating to human rights, the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its pertaining protocols, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and many others. Furthermore, Croatia adopted its own legal framework, as well as other institutional, governmental and nongovernmental arrangements and initiatives for protecting minority rights and dealing with hate speech.

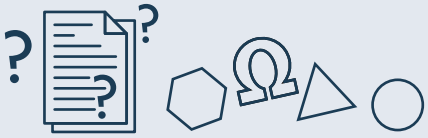
Article 39 of the Croatian Constitution prohibits hate-related expressions of violence, stating that "any call for or incitement to war, or resort to violence, national, racial or religious hatred, or any form of intolerance shall be prohibited and punishable by law."[182] Furthermore, the Republic of Croatia adjusted its criminal code in accordance with the provisions laid out by the E.U. Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia. As a result, Article 87(20) of the criminal code specifies that "a hate crime shall mean a criminal offence committed on account

180 Cvijanović, 2018, pp. 125-126.
181 Ciglenecki, Drazen. "Hasanbegovic Presidents: No, 'Ready for Home' is not an old Croatian but an Ustasha greeting," September 6, 2017. https://www.novilist.hr/novosti/hrvatska/hasanbegovic-predsjednici-ne-za-dom-spremni-nije-stari-hrvatski-nego-ustaski-pozdrav/
182 The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, January 2014, p. 13. https://www.usud.hr/sites/default/files/dokumenti/The_consolidated_text_of_the_Constitution_of_the_Republic_of_Croatia_as_of_15_January_2014.pdf.

Legal Gaps in Legislation



Only one article of the Electronic Media Act explicitly mentions antisemitism



The ambiguous legal framework does not differentiate between a misdemeanor and usage of "prima facie disputed insignia of hate," such as the swastika and Nazi 'SS' emblem leading to different legal interpretations and lack of legal regulation

of a person's race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity."[183] It also includes a statutory definition of hate crime. Article 325 became the most recognized legal instrument for sanctioning all public manifestations of hatred and intolerance as it forbids the incitement or distribution of content and materials calling for "violence and hatred directed against any group or a member of such a group on account of their race, religion, national or ethnic origin, descent, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other particularities," while prescribing punitive measures for anyone who "publicly approves of, denies or grossly trivializes the crimes of genocide, crimes of aggression, crimes against humanity or war crimes directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group on account of their race, religion, national or ethnic origin, descent or color, in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group."[184] However, only Article 12(2) of the Electronic Media Act explicitly mentions antisemitism, sanctioning any incitement, approval, calling for or spreading of hatred or discrimination based on abovementioned characteristics, but also "antisemitism and xenophobia, ideas of the fascist, nationalist, communist and all other totalitarian regimes."[185] Finally, hate speech is also sanctioned under very broad provisions of the Croatian Misdemeanor Act on Public Order and Peace.

Hate crime data are regularly reported to the OSCE-ODIHR. Data are collected by the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities. According to hate crime police records for 2018 (ODHIR) there were 19 cases motivated by racism and xenophobia, four cases of bias against Roma and Sinti, two cases of antisemitism (damage of property and incitement to violence) and eight cases of bias against Muslims. Additionally, incidents reported by other sources counted 17 cases of racism and xenophobia, one case each of bias against

183 The Croatian Parliament: Decision Promulgating the Criminal Code, October 21, 2011. http://www.mvep.hr/files/file/dokumenti/prevodenje/zakoni/kazneni-zakon-nn-125-11-eng.pdf
184 Ibid.
185 Electronic media act, OG 153/09, 84/11, 94/13 and 136/13.

Roma and Sinti, antisemitism (a politician's office was vandalized with an antisemitic sign) and bias against Muslims.[186] The ombudsman's office report on hate crimes claimed eight cases of antisemitism that same year, while none were mentioned in its 2017 report.[187]

Fifty-one hate crimes were reported by the Ministry of Interior in 2019, according to the report published by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities. The ODIHR reported 33 cases in 2018, 25 in 2017, 35 in 2016, 24 in 2015 and 22 in 2014. Of these, 117 cases were prosecuted in 2019, including those from previous years, while ODIHR reported 23 cases prosecuted in 2018, 16 in 2017, 37 in 2016, 27 in 2015 and 60 in 2014. According to the office's data, the court ruled on 10 hate crime cases in 2019, while ODIHR reported eight cases sentenced in 2018, 12 in 2017, seven each in 2016 and 2015 and 6 in 2014. The government reported that 48 hatred/discrimination-based misdemeanor cases were prosecuted while 11 sentenced in 2019.[188]

Croatia's anti-discrimination legislation, enacted in 2009, includes provisions aimed at the protection and promotion of equality as the highest value of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia, prohibiting and penalizing any discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race or ethnic affiliation, color, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, trade-union membership, education, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, native identity, expression or sexual orientation. According to Article 25, breach of this law can lead to fines up to 40,000 euros.[189]

The Misdemeanor Act on Public Order and Peace became a panacea for sanctioning the widest range of expressions of hate speech, especially for the controversial "Za dom spremni" salute/insignia. However, due to the lack of legal regulation of disputed symbols and different legal interpretations, this remains the most divisive issue in Croatia. It reflects the problem of an ambiguous legal framework that does not differentiate between a misdemeanor and usage of "prima facie disputed insignia of hate," such as "the fascist Roman salute, the so-called Hitler salute accompanied by swastika, the Nazi 'SS' emblem, the Chetnik cockade, the Ustaša 'U', the Ustaša salute 'Za dom i poglavnika (For the homeland and its leader)' and 'Za dom spremni (For the homeland ready).'"[190] The government attempted to address this legal gap by instituting the Council for Dealing with the Consequences of Undemocratic Regimes, whose 2018 Dialogue Document is mentioned above.

186 Croatian Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities "Suppression of Hate Crimes," 2019. https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/suzbijanje-zlocina-iz-mrznje/602. OSCE/ODHIR "Hate Crime Reporting: Croatia," 2019. https://hatecrime.osce.org/croatia.

187 Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Croatia. "Report for the Ombudsman of 2018," March 2019. https://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/download/izvjesce-pucke-pravobraniteljice-za-2018-godinu/?wpdmdl=4747&refresh=5f21f492295b11596060818, p.32.

188 Croatian Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities. "Suppression of Hate Crimes," 2019. https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/suzbijanje-zlocina-iz-mrznje/602. OSCE/ODHIR. "Hate Crime Reporting: Croatia," 2019. https://hatecrime.osce.org/croatia.

189 Croatian Parliament. "Anti-Discrimination Law," 2008. https://arhiva.prs.hr/index.php/zors/zakon-o-suzbijanju-diskriminacije.

190 The Council for Dealing with the Consequences of Undemocratic Regimes. "Dialogue Document: Postulates and Recommendations on Specific Normative Regulation of Symbols, Emblems and other Insignia of Totalitarian Regimes and Movements," February 28, 2018, pp. 23-25. https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Vijesti/2018/05%20svibanj/5%20svibnja/DOKUMENT%20DIJALOGA%20ENG.pdf.

Institutional Mechanisms

As noted above, antisemitism and other hate crimes in Croatia have been reported systematically since 2014 via the OSCE monitoring website. According to the ombudsman's office report for 2019, hate crime cases end up in front of the court that often results in only a warning for the perpetrator. This indicates that such cases are not met with adequate sentencing and consequently do not act as a deterrent against future acts.[191] The ombudsman's office also regularly monitors the status of national, religious and other minorities. It provides detailed accounts of discrimination, prejudice and hate speech complaints. In addition, there is always one political representative in the parliament who represents the interests of the Jewish minority.

Victim and witness support is well developed in Croatia. At the state level, it is provided by the Ministry of Justice's Independent Service for Victims and Witness Support. The 2013 Act on Compensation to Crime Victims provides various financial compensations for victims.[192] The application form for such compensation can be found on the Ministry of Justice's webpage. Additionally, the webpage "Za žrtve" ("For Victims") offers information about support, services and other steps that victims can take. There is a National Call Center for victims of criminal acts. Victim Support Europe, a leading European NGO that acts on behalf of all crime victims with its Croatian organization Victim and Witness Support Service Croatia, gathers "statistical data about the victims and the possibility to follow the procedures in individual cases."[193] Also, in 2019, the House of Human Rights Zagreb published a hate crime textbook as a guide for educating professionals about hate crimes, the legal framework and protection of victims, yet certain gaps in implementation remain.

In 2005, the Republic of Croatia became a permanent member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which subsequently changed its name to IHRA in 2013. Since joining the IHRA and following its recommendations, Croatia has established various activities, communication tools, and commemorative ceremonies related to the Holocaust, such as an educational network of teachers and professors dedicated to providing a learning environment for studying the Holocaust and targeting its denial. The government also regularly supports cultural, religious, and other activities and publications of the Jewish minority in Croatia. Furthermore, in 2017 the government developed the Action Plan for Implementation of the National Plan to Combat Discrimination for the period from 2017–2022. It identifies a number of priority areas for addressing hate crimes, namely education, public awareness and improvements in hate crime data collection.

Finally, the Jasenovac Memorial Site at the former concentration camp has become a site of public reckonings, as well as one of the most prominent and important commemorative sites and museums in Croatia, enjoying both domestic and international respect and recognition, regardless of its often being politicized. Yet, it should be mentioned that, regardless of the official stand regarding the Jasenovac

191 Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Croatia. "Report for the Ombudsman of 2019." March 2020, p. 23. https://www.ombudsman.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Izvješće-pučke-pravobraniteljice-za-2019.pdf.
192 Zakon HR. "Law on Financial Compensation to Victims of Criminal Offenses," NN 80/08, 2008. https://www.zakon.hr/z/252/Zakon-o-novčanoj-naknadi-žrtvama-kaznenih-djela.
193 Victim Support Europe. "Victim and Witness Support Service Croatia – Projects and activities," January 15, 2018. https://victimsupport.eu/news-from-members/victim-witness-support-service-croatia-project-activities/

Memorial and recent political agreements with Jewish and Serbian minorities to commemorate this site together with Croatian officials, in previous years there were attempts by some activists and individuals, if not necessarily to openly deny Ustaša crimes, to portray the Jasenovac camp in a different light — questioning the scope of horrors so Jasenovac would not look like a death camp, or even masking the Ustaša crimes behind the claim that the camp was also used for mass killings of enemies by the Communist regime.

One such example was a 2017 revisionist documentary by controversial film director Jakov Sedlar entitled "Jasenovac — the Truth," in which Sedlar promoted the right-wing/populist myth that Jasenovac was merely a labor camp during the Ustaša but became a death camp after 1945 under Communist rule.[194] Similarly, the so-called Society for Research of the Threefold Jasenovac Camp follows this type of historical revisionism. Its President, Igor Vukić, and revisionists like academic Josip Pečarić and Catholic priest Stjepan Razum claim to show via various research and publications that Jasenovac was a labor and concentration camp — not a death camp — before the Communists took power in 1945.[195] The problem is not only that such revisionist views aim at "soft" rehabilitation of the Ustaša regime including NDH, but that these attempts get public attention and, more disturbingly, have been either institutionally honored (Sedlar's film received the Zagreb City Award for 2017), or backed financially by institutions (the Ministry of Croatian War Veterans gave 80000 kunas/about 10000 Euros in 2017 and 2018 for researching "the truth" about Jasenovac).[196] This should be considered a warning that historical revisionism is institutionally supported and thrives.

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

Media monitoring focused on Croatian sources in the Croatian language but also included a selected number of Bosnian and Serbian sources in Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. Researchers worked with 1,750 relevant mentions.[197] Out of this number, 64 contained antisemitic statements and 380 discussed instances of antisemitism. The rest of the relevant media pieces contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

In Croatian news, the subject of antisemitism caught the attention of media mostly as coverage of various commemorative and memorializing events related to Jewish suffering during World War II. While these events have been associated with historical memory, media coverage focused on how memorialization and Holocaust remembrance are currently observed, especially through coverage of statements or gestures of state officials and politicians in the context of domestic memory politics, but also related to international events.[198]

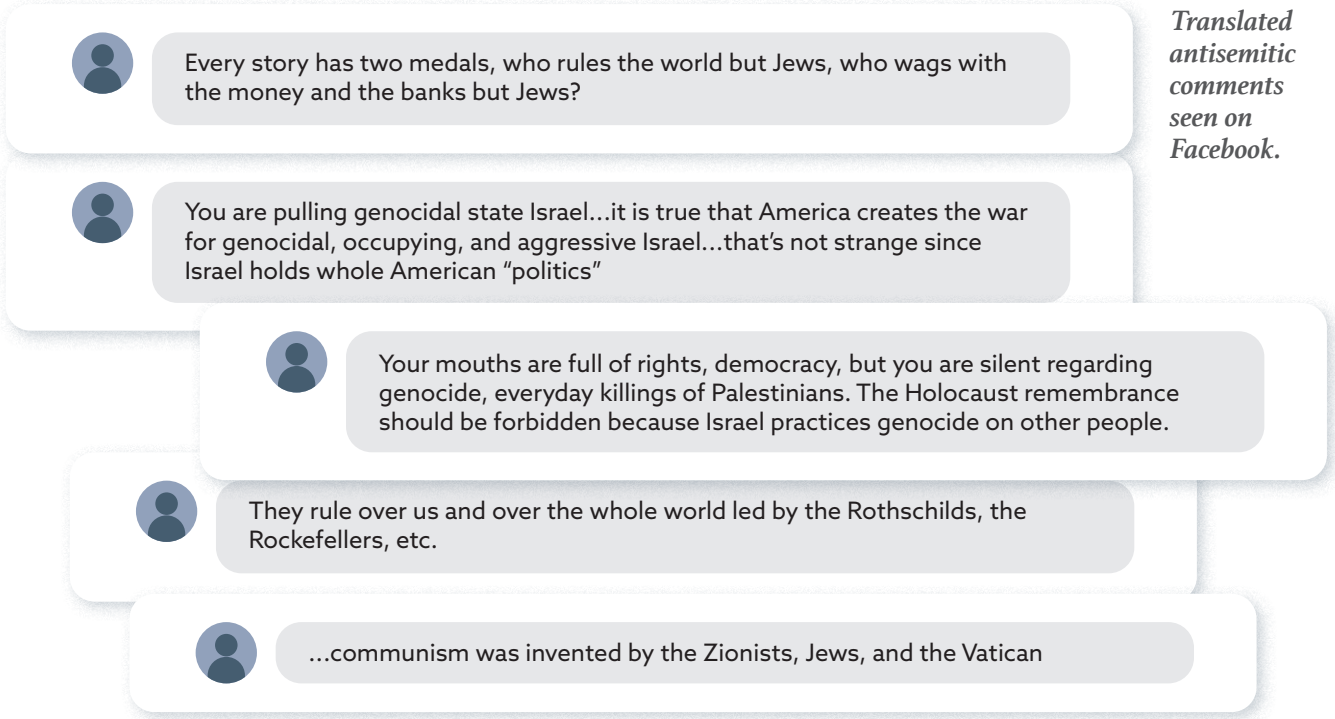
194 Duhacek, Gordon. "Sedlarov's film 'Jasenovac - the truth' is a falsification of history," May 23, 2017. https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/sedlarov-film-jasenovac-istina-predstavlja-falsificiranje-povijesti-20170522

195 Jasenovac Triple Camp Research Society. https://drustvojasenovac.wordpress.com/about/. For the criticism of their public promotion of such revisionism, see Vladisavljevic, Anja "Book Event Questioning WWII Crimes Planned for Zagreb Church," January 7, 2019. https://balkaninsight.com/2019/01/07/new-revisionist-book-on-jasenovac-wwii-camp-01-07-2019-1/.

196 https://www.portalnovosti.com/fasizam-na-proracunu

197 See section on Methodology: Categorization of Antisemitism.

198 See examples at: Hvartska. "The Croatian Parliament paid tribute to all Holocaust victims," January 24, 2020. https://www.nacional.hr/hrvatski-sabor-odao-pocast-svim-zrtvama-holokausta/ and https://www.nacional.hr/hrvatski-sabor-odao-pocast-svim-zrtvama-holokausta/ and Otvoreno. "Condemnation of anti-Semitism at the heart of World Holocaust Forum," January 23, 2020. https://otvoreno.hr/eu-i-svijet/osuda-antisemitizma-u-



Translated antisemitic comments seen on Facebook.

The most common narrative discussed in news sources was related to historical memorialization (77 times) and mostly linked to domestic politics of memory. Overall, the most frequent antisemitic narratives in monitored sources, including news, under-article discussions and Facebook, involved some sort of Jewish conspiracy. **Conspiracy** narratives were used 37 times in antisemitic statements and discussed 102 times in media pieces focused on instances of antisemitism. These conspiracy theories presented Jews as agents of an invisible global force of economic, social and political control. Conspiracy narratives mostly originated abroad and aimed to spread international conspiracy theories about the global Jewish elite or those controlled by Jews/Israel in the West (primarily the United States), particularly when they came as a reaction to contemporary Israeli politics. The second most common form of antisemitism was false statements about Jews. Researchers used the **false** tag 71 times for media pieces discussing instances of antisemitism and 20 times in cases of antisemitic statements.

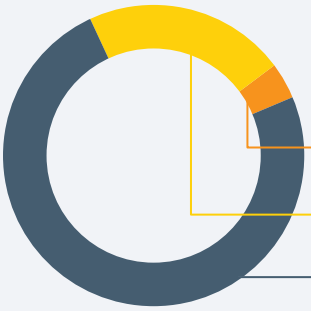
The persistence of turbulent politics in the Middle East, especially the conflict with Palestinians, served as a pretext to present the state of Israel, and Jews in general, together with allies (primarily the United States) as being directly responsible for or sanctioning violent, racist, fascist and even genocidal politics against Palestinians (the **AS-Israel** tag was used 97 times, mainly in under-article discussions and Facebook posts, as exemplified below).

Antisemitic Narratives

Primary antisemitic narratives consisted of conspiracy theories about the world being controlled by Jews, backed by implicit antisemitic statements. This could be seen in narratives about Jews controlling the media, their influence on the global economy and/or their ability to shape global politics via powerful public figures (Soros,

sredistu-svjetskog-foruma-o-holokaustu/248480.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 1,750 relevant media pieces:

- **3.7%** contained antisemitic statements
- **21.7%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **74.6%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | RHETORIC | PHYSICAL | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



ISRAEL



PUBLIC FIGURE



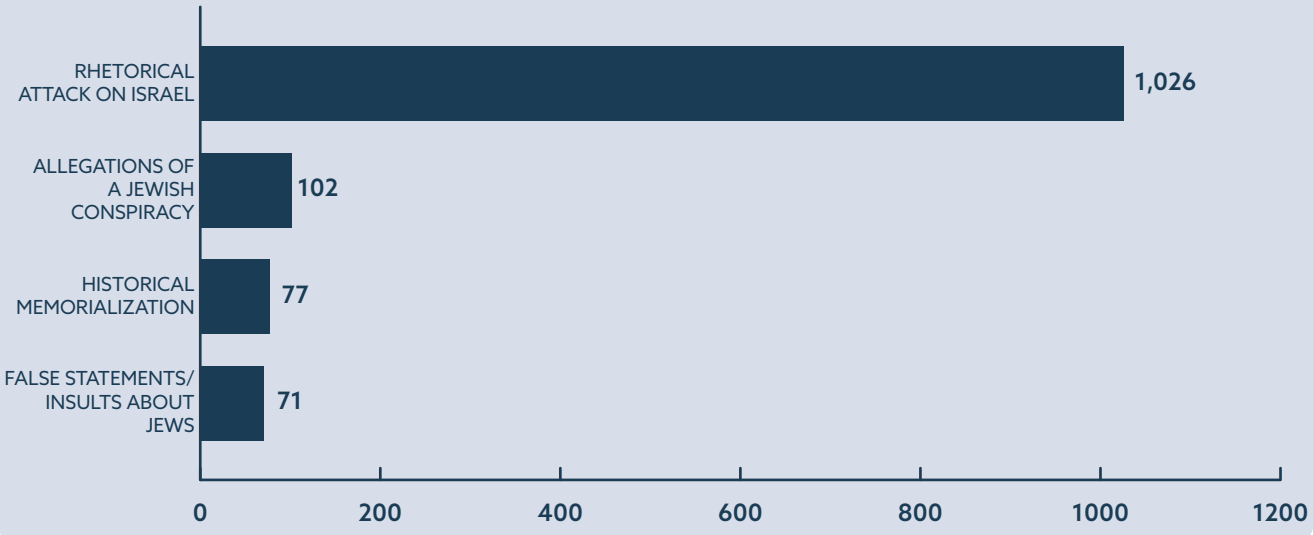
CONSPIRACY

ISRAEL: Instances where an attack on Israel, Israelis, or Israeli history is also antisemitic.

PUBLIC FIGURE: Antisemitic instances involved in speech or writing from a public figure or prominent institution or company.

CONSPIRACY: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the power of Jews as a collective.

Most frequent mentions:



the Rothschild family, the Rockefellers, etc.). Monitored antisemitic conspiracies mostly targeted Jews in general, particular public figures like Soros or other public figures like Trump perceived by the commentor as pro-Jewish or pro-Israeli. Domestically, antisemitic rhetoric was sometimes directed toward representatives of the Jewish community like Ivo Goldstein or Ognjen Kraus.[199]

Antisemitic statements spreading conspiracy theories were mostly present in Facebook and media discussions in which the domestic public was presented as victims of that conspiracy (or world order). These are often associated with historical accusations of Jews controlling the economy or shaping devastating politics (bolshevism/communism) and included Holocaust denial.[200] Antisemitic views and comments could also be found as part of the contemporary anti-Israeli narrative related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or linked to more generalized existing narratives that reinforced traditional Jewish stereotypes.

Yet these sorts of rhetorical antisemitic statements were not primarily targeted at the Jewish community in Croatia. Nevertheless, Croatian society has been burdened with opposing narratives about World War II and the communist postwar period, which are shaping current memory politics, and some antisemitic statements appeared in this context as well. This could be particularly seen in attempts at historical revisionism or denial of the scope of the crimes at the Ustaša concentration camp Jasenovac, with claims that they are lessened or counterweighted by the crimes of the communist Yugoslavia's Tito regime.[201] Such discussions sometimes sparked antisemitic rhetoric against prominent figures of the Croatian Jewish community, assigning to Jews some sort of agency in the former attempts to realize Serbian or Communist domination over Croatia.

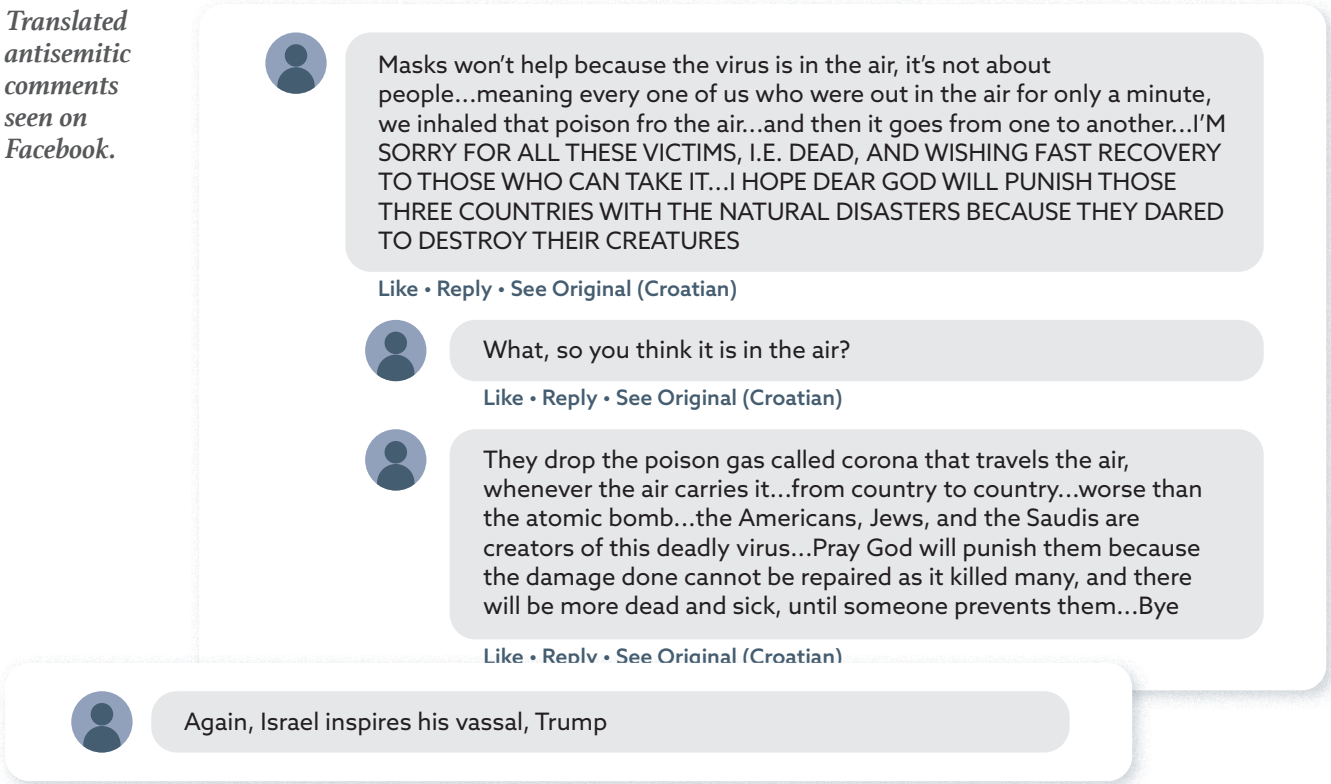
Furthermore, the **AS-Public Figure** tag (marking antisemitic behavior of public figures) appeared in online media 24 times, mostly in news discussing antisemitic incidents. Worth mentioning was the conspiracy-oriented antisemitic rhetoric of young populist politician and former parliamentary Representative Ivan Pernar (Živi zid/Human Shield Party). On his Facebook page, Pernar occasionally wrote about the "Soros agenda" as a Zionist creation, and also about bolshevism and communism as originally Jewish inceptions (citing the Jewish ancestry of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky other key figures). Pernar linked all these figures with the horrors of bolshevism and communism

199 Ivo Goldstein is a well-known Jewish historian and university professor in Croatia whose publications are mostly related to history of the Jews in Croatia. With his father Slavko Goldstein, also a Jewish intellectual, he founded a Jewish community known as Bet Israel. Ognjen Kraus is also Croatian intellectual of the Jewish origin who founded the Jewish community in Zagreb in 1993, and was the coordinator of the Jewish communities in Croatia.

200 Anti-communist and antisemitic rhetoric can be seen together in the comment to the text related to the commemoration of Jews in World War II. Direktno. "Commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust in Dakavo," June 2, 2019. https://direktno.hr/domovina/komemoracija-zrtve-holokausta-dakovu-157353/.

201 Ustaša was a revolutionary organization of Croatian émigré circles whose leader Ante Pavelić emigrated to Italy from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but he returned in April 1941 to form the Ustaša government after the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This government, known as the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was a 'Quisling' totalitarian entity completely dependent on Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. As such, it followed the antisemitic and racial politics and by organizing concentration, labor, and death camps carried out mass crimes against Jews, Serbs, Roma, and Croatian dissidents. According to official data Jasenovac out of 83.145 victims identified by names, there were 47.627 victims of the Serbian nationality (Goldstein, 2018). Jewish Yad Vashem acknowledges similar view of 80.000-100.000 victims of the camp. This is why Jasenovac is "the most prominent substantive and symbolic expression of that creation" known as NDH (Kasapović, 2018:11).

Translated antisemitic comments seen on Facebook.



and implied the potential threat of alleged global Zionism.[202]

Conspiracy narratives dominated throughout the whole monitoring period.[203] Israel, Donald Trump, Adolf Hitler and Jewish figures both historical (Marx, Trotsky) and contemporary (Soros) often appeared in these narratives as perpetrators, while Palestinians and the global population appeared as victims. Such statements occasionally affirmed that Jews were victims of the Nazis, but now claimed that the victims became perpetrators.

Jewish conspiracies were triggered by ongoing socio-political problems such as the migrant crisis, identity politics, issues with Palestinians, or Iran, in which the United States and its leadership were perceived as Jewish vassals/puppets, and the most recent crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In all of these conspiracies, Jews appeared as an engine of the world's destabilization.

Antisemitic conspiracies included narratives associated with the Holocaust, varying from those attempting to legitimize historical violence toward Jews to those implying that Hitler was organizing the Holocaust together with his Jewish "masters" so the Zionists would be able to create the state of Israel.

Countries Mentioned and Sources

Israel was mentioned 1026 times and triggered several negative antisemitic commentaries, mostly related to the

202 https://www.facebook.com/pernari/posts/2314612005531236; https://www.facebook.com/pernari/posts/2629249320734168; https://www.facebook.com/pernari/posts/2696329210692845; https://www.facebook.com/pernari/posts/2696053764053723

203 As opposed to other country studies, due to low level of relevant mentions we didn't focus on specific time peaks, but monitored the whole time period between January 1, 2019 and May 20, 2020.

Conspiracy narratives dominated throughout the whole monitoring period.

conflict with Palestinians. However, due to Croatian political relations with Israel, many media mentions covered positive bilateral relations, or simply particular issues with the Croatian government's attempts to buy Israeli military equipment. Other mentions included Germany (11 tags), mostly in a neutral context in regard to remembering the Holocaust or particular antisemitic events, and the E.U. (five tags), or the United States (four tags), in a neutral context when covering antisemitic violence or in a negative context as a supporter of Israeli politics against Palestinians or against Iran.

Antisemitic language containing conspiracy narratives about Jews was mostly present on Facebook and in discussions, but much less in news. False and vulgar statements about Jews were distributed similarly. **Accusations** were mostly expressed on Facebook and to some degree in the discussions, without significant appearances in news. Unlike these, narratives discussing memorialization and Holocaust denial prevailed in news. Links between Jewish conspiracies and Israel were common in online discussions and Facebook commentaries.

Antisemitic statements were most often present in comments on the Facebook pages of mainstream newspapers Vecernji List and under article discussions on the online news portal *logicno.com*. Direktno-hr was the online medium with the highest number of online pieces both discussing antisemitism in its content and producing antisemitic content in the monitored period.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

While concrete expressions of antisemitism are rare in contemporary Croatia, traditional antisemitic biases and conspiracies are on the rise. It is important to make a distinction between some generalized antisemitic statements — largely those pointing toward a global Jewish conspiracy and accusations (historical and contemporary) on the one hand, and antisemitism that is explicit or linked with historical revisionism related to inner Croatian socio-political divisions regarding historical symbols and memorialization of the past. Although online media are a potent platform for expressing hatred in general, and antisemitism in particular, extreme calls for violence are rare (only 13 "flag" tags were used, mostly on Facebook) and unrelated to local Croatian issues.

Online media monitoring in Croatia showed that antisemitism was not a part of the major political discourse, but rather a marginal phenomenon in social media and under-article discussions. Yet, beyond the monitoring process, one could trace two official political levels when it comes to dealing with antisemitism: the first level was the rhetoric of state officials and institutions that condemned the Ustaša regime and its crimes; the second was the level of official tolerance showing that certain state or local institutions basically tolerated, or even

Beyond the monitoring process, there are two **official political levels** when it comes to dealing with antisemitism in Croatia:

1. The rhetoric of state officials and institutions that condemned the Ustaša regime and its crimes.
2. The level of official tolerance for historical revisionism.

supported, various attempts at historical revisionism. While certain symbolism has been penalized as a misdemeanor, until recently such symbolism was part of some concerts or football games. The nuances between those two levels of political discourse, however, have not been elicited throughout mere online monitoring.

When antisemitic rhetoric is used in online media it often aggravates ethnic tensions between the Croatian majority and other minorities, especially when it appears in the context of historical debates about World War II, communism or relations with the Serbian minority.

Conclusion

Following this media monitoring, one can group antisemitic narratives in the online media space into several categories. The first could be called "casual antisemitism" and relies on existing biases about Jews, such as Jews being money-oriented, greedy, stingy, dirty, etc. This casual antisemitism recently paired with the second category, "conspiracy antisemitism," according to which a "Jewish lobby" controls the world and is behind various historical and ongoing global political, financial and health crises. Anti-Jewish global conspiracy narratives are also being adjusted to the domestic context in the form of occasional conspiracy-related rhetoric about Jewish, masonic or Serbian control over Croatian political and media space. The third category of narratives is those that work with historical revisionism and spark antisemitic rhetoric of denial that might also aggravate tensions in society, among different ethnic groups and within the Croatian majority. Historical and ideological polemics often generate reactions from Serbian and Jewish representatives, usually resulting in anti-Serbian and antisemitic commentaries in online media. However, while manifestations of political extremism toward political Serbism or Serbs appears in public discourse from time to time, it should be noted that antisemitic political extremism like explicit Holocaust denial (e.g., figures like David Irving in the U.K.) or denial of the Jasenovac camp is not publicly present in Croatia — or at least seems not to be a dominant tendency. However, historical revisionism is alive and occasionally present in the media, usually cloaked in the guise of researching the communists' terror (as exemplified in Sedlar's documentary, or in the work of the Society for Research of the Threefold Jasenovac Camp). As for right-wing populists and political extremists, it should be noted that they are not focused on utilizing antisemitic narratives because Croatian Jews are not predominantly perceived in the public discourse as a minority endangering or destabilizing Croatian society. But revisionism, and thus implicit antisemitism, can be traced in continuous "ustashization" of the Croatian society; that is, in perpetuation or presence of narratives, symbols and figures attempting to diminish or negate the Nazi-fascist character of the Ustaša regime or linking it with legitimate aspirations for Croatian statehood.

There are insufficient data to prove that antisemitic narratives promote the objectives of a foreign state or non-state actor. What can be noticed, though, is that occasional accusations of antisemitism come from the Serbian government. even members of the Croatian Jewish community, like Ivo Goldstein, were accused of revisionism for criticizing the number of Jasenovac victims the Serbian narrative was using in its anti-Croatian propaganda as higher than existing research suggests. (Read more about this issue below in the section about Serbia.)

Relevant media discussion in Croatia is focused on Holocaust remembrance and historical memory both globally and domestically. Aside from these historical remembrance topics, the overall narrative about the Holocaust and the Ustaša crimes is present in academic work and the state's educational program, especially with arranged visits for schoolchildren to the Jasenovac Memorial Site. However, the topic of antisemitism — along with the crimes against other minorities like Serbs and Roma — can be seen as unbalanced and not particularly detailed in history textbooks' presentation of the Holocaust in both its Nazi and Ustaša manifestations. While this deserves more research into the content of various history textbooks that exist for both primary education and high school (there are at least five different versions of textbooks, with different narratives about these themes), at least two problems can be noted when it comes to antisemitism, the Holocaust and the Ustaša terror. First, a more detailed approach is needed as this is not "just" another history lecture but deals with a difficult past and the attempt to stop historical revisionism. Second, the rhetoric in some of the textbooks is shaped to occasionally forgo emphasizing certain minorities or uses more generalized statements about many victims regardless of their nationality, while using a narrative of Croatian victimhood in which Croatian people — like the communist partisans or other Croatian dissidents, particularly the members of HSS — are mentioned first as the victims of the Jasenovac camp, instead of Jews, Serbs or Roma.[204]

In conclusion, online media monitoring shows that government needs to deal with antisemitic biases, conspiracies and historical memory. These biases and conspiracies, however marginal, can hardly be rooted out if the government focuses merely on its standard educational program. When it comes to the politics of memory, the government needs to show real, rather than simply declaratory, efforts to confront historical revisionism as the most present current of domestic antisemitism. Several recommendations to policymakers stem from insights gained through the monitoring.

First, there should be continuous monitoring of online media focusing on antisemitic tendencies and trends. Antisemitism should not only be approached and researched in its explicit forms, but an additional effort should be made to track its various country-specific manifestations, for example, by monitoring justification of the Ustaša regime.

Second, fighting antisemitic biases and conspiracies should be a task for both the government and the Jewish community. The government needs to work on cultural understanding via the education system by offering supplementary curricula (e.g., a course pointed toward education for a civil and "decent society" that would also teach about the history of violence and oppression toward different minority groups).[205] Also, the government needs to engage with various campaigns that target young people in particular and sponsor traditional media products (e.g., a documentary

204 Although the educational curricula research is far more ambitious project beyond the purposes of this report, I found these types of statements in a few editions that I had a chance to look at, particularly in one for vocational high schools "Povijesni pregled za strukovne škole" (Meridijani) and to some extent in the history textbook for the eight grade of the primary schools "Tragom prošlosti" (Školska knjiga).

205 Avishai Margalit introduces decency as a social concept advocating for a decent society as one whose people but more importantly whose institutions do not humiliate people where he understands humiliation as "the rejection of human being as human, that is, treating people as if they were not human beings but merely things, tools, animals, subhumans, or inferior humans" [Margalit, Avishai. The Decent Society, (Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 121].

about the rise, failures and wrongdoings of the Ustaša regime) in order to encourage critical thinking and social discussion about antisemitism.

Third, the Jewish community needs to be more present in public life by organizing various happenings — not only academic debates, but cultural activities focused on promoting Jewish life, culture and tradition — to alleviate the recent proliferation of anti-Israeli sentiments and conspiracy narratives about Jews.

Croatia needs to put an equal effort into the memorialization of both its historical traumas: fascism and communism. While communist crimes have been, and still are, being investigated, discussed and publicly condemned, the link between antisemitism and the Ustaša crimes has often been minimized or relativized as can be seen from commentaries and discussion in media monitoring. The politics of memory need to nourish the culture of remembrance and create a social climate that would be unsupportive of symbols that are directed explicitly or implicitly against some citizens or minority groups. A long-term project in attaining these goals should consist of opening a national museum of terror in Zagreb as a national symbol for remembrance and the best bulwark against similar malevolent and violent projects.

Kosovo

The level of antisemitism in Kosovo's society is limited. Some antisemitic sentiment and conspiracy theories regarding Israel and Jewish communities worldwide exist but are limited to small portions of society, including more conservative and radical Muslim communities. The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is a narrative used by parts of the conservative religious community. However, law enforcement institutions monitor mainstream and social media for any elements of antisemitism and hate speech.

Although antisemitism is not mentioned specifically in the constitution or laws, the legal framework safeguards the rights of all Kosovo citizens regardless of language, nationality or religion. Hate speech is a criminal act and minorities are also protected by the Law on Prevention of Discrimination and the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities. In the OSCE-ODIHR 2018 hate crime report for Kosovo, there were 36 cases of racism and xenophobic bias against Muslims and Christians, which included property damage, vandalism, physical assault, threats and bombing.

The results of Kosovo media monitoring are mainly from Serbia-based, Serbian-language media that have a wide reach in Kosovo and are read by Serbs and older



generations of Albanians.[212] With few exceptions, noted in the report, Albanian-language, Kosovo-based mainstream media have very few instances of antisemitism in their coverage of events pertaining to Kosovo's context, the region or the Middle East. For sake of clarity, this paper will refer to Serbia-based media that have a reach in Kosovo as Serbian-language media and to Kosovo media as Albanian-language media. In the first part, analyzing the prevailing types of antisemitism discussed in online media monitoring showed that antisemitic statements were present in the regional media, especially in the Serbian-language media. Antisemitic statements in

212 The limited number of Albanian language sources used in the monitoring has historical data available from 2019.



Kosovo-based media were found mostly in under-article comments on news articles chronicling historical events focusing on the crimes against Jews during World War II. The dominant narrative in Kosovo is that the Albanians were the only nation to have protected the Jewish people during the war, which is more historically accurate with regard to Albania than Kosovo.[213] According to Yad Vashem's webpage, between 600 to 1,800 Jews entered Albania in this period, seeking refuge from Nazi persecution. While both countries were united under the same Italian protectorate, most Kosovo Jews in the Balkans were helped to escape to Albania.[214] In 1944, under German rule, the SS Skanderbeg Division arrested 281 Jews in Kosovo and handed them over to the Germans, who sent them to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where many of them died.[215]

Incidents involving Israel and other developments in the Middle East attracted the highest number of articles, antisemitic comments and conspiracy theories on Facebook. In the second part, analyzing the occurrence of antisemitic statements in the monitored media, the results showed mostly regional news in which Balkan countries competed against one another over who defended the Jewish population and who was a perpetrator during World War II, as well as who was the victim and who was the perpetrator in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Some influence was also observed of Turkish media broadcasting in the Albanian language in the Albanian-speaking areas of North Macedonia and parts of Kosovo. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been an important narrative trigger of antisemitic mentions in the media. The majority of antisemitic narratives were manifested through comments on Facebook pages of various media outlets.

Youth constitutes the majority of the population in Kosovo. However, youth in the region of the Western Balkans and Kosovo have a limited memory or knowledge about

213 Yad Vashem - The World Holocaust Remembrance Center "BESA: A CODE OF HONOR. Muslim Albanians Who rescued Jews During the Holocaust," https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/besa/index.asp.
214 Elsie, Robert. *Historical Dictionary of Kosovo*. Second Edition, (Scarecrow Press Inc., 2011). p. 139.
215 Malcolm, Noel. *Kosovo: A Short History*. (London, England: Pan Macmillan, 1998). p. 310.

the history and conflicts of World War II. But some lived in the region during the Balkan conflicts and have fresh memories of them. Most of the countries of the Western Balkans have designed curricula in public schools about the events of World War II, the Holocaust, the definition of antisemitism and the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s. But these require revisions and improvements in many areas. This approach would increase youths' knowledge of antisemitism and would prevent youth in the Western Balkans from being prone to antisemitic language or falling victim to fake news and propaganda inciting hate crimes and extremism.

Kosovo institutions should reinitiate the annual Interfaith Dialogue Conference that was so successful in bringing together faith-community leaders from around the world, local politicians, foreign diplomats, academics and civil society representatives in nurturing harmony and coexistence between different religious and ethnic communities.

Historical Overview

Jews in Kosovo can be traced back to the 16th century with Sephardi communities established in Priština, Prizren, and Mitrovica with around five hundred members before World War II when the territory was part of Yugoslavia, and the position of Jews reflected those of Jews in Serbia.[216]

In 1941, Kosovo was incorporated into the Italian-ruled Greater Albania except for Mitrovica, which was under German occupation and where 88 Jews were deported to Sajmiste Concentration Camp near Belgrade and killed. Hundreds of Serbian Jews fled to Kosovo in late 1941, when it became the only escape route to Italian-held territories. In March 1942, Italian military police detained 51 Jewish refugees in Priština and turned them over to the Nazis in a single recorded incident of Italian official collaboration with the Nazi Final Solution.[217] After Italy's withdrawal from the war in the summer of 1943, the Germans took control of Kosovo. The following year Nazi Chief Heinrich Himmler recruited Kosovo Albanians in the Skanderburg Unit (21 Division of SS Skanderbeg), which was commanded by the Germans. The Skanderbeg unit arrested 281 Jews who were still in Kosovo and deported them to Bergen-Belsen, where around 200 are estimated to have perished.[218] In late 1944, Communist-led Partisans recaptured Kosovo from Albania and made it part of Yugoslavia again.

After the war, half of surviving Jews emigrated to Israel while the rest lived relatively peacefully until the 1991 census, where there were at least 112 Jews recorded in Kosovo.[219] However, the Kosovo Albanian striving for equal republic status and later independence from Yugoslavia led to forceful suppression by the Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević. Throughout the 1990s, Serbia suppressed Kosovo Albanian rights and their movement for independence. From 1998, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army clashed with Serbian security forces leading to the mass expulsion of Kosovo Albanians, which lasted until mid-1999, when Serb forces were expelled from Kosovo by the NATO military intervention. During the conflict, the 50 remaining Jews

216 Romano, Jasa (1980). *Jews of Yugoslavia 1941–1945*, Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia. pp. 573–590.
217 "Kosovo Virtual Jewish History Tour," Jewish Virtual Library, 2021. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kosovo-virtual-jewish-history-tour.
218 Malcolm, Noel. Kosovo: A Short History, (London, England: Pan Macmillan, 1998). p. 310.
219 "Kosovo Virtual Jewish History Tour," Jewish Virtual Library, 2021. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kosovo-virtual-jewish-history-tour.

fled to Serbia, with which they had close cultural and linguistic ties.

Today very few Jews live in Kosovo, mostly in the town of Prizren. Recently Kosovo has established diplomatic relations with Israel and adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism. Kosovo's independence is still denied by Serbia and half of the countries in the world, blocking the country's integration in the E.U. and other international organizations, while relations with the remaining Serbs and Serbia remain tense.

The Jewish Minority in Kosovo Today

The Jewish community, along with all other existing religious communities in the country, participated in the drafting of the Law on Religious Freedom, in which Judaism is listed as one of the five traditional religions along with Islam, Roman Catholicism, Serbian Orthodoxy and Protestantism. A small Jewish community of about 50 people resides in the southwestern city of Prizren. State institutions do not have reliable data about the exact number of Jews living in Kosovo. For instance, according to Ruzhdi Shkodra, the president of the Jewish community in Pristina, around 80 Jewish families live in Kosovo. They are well integrated with local communities and well accepted by the local populations.

There were no reports of antisemitic attacks in Kosovo in 2018 or 2019. However, Kosovo institutions have been criticized for neglecting Jewish heritage in the country, having failed to maintain Jewish cemeteries in Novo Brdo, Pristina, Gjilan, Prizren and smaller towns.[220] In 2016, the Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a public letter to the president expressing the center's concern about the presence of antisemitic literature, published in Egypt by the Muslim Brotherhood, in Kosovo's bookstores and libraries. Following the public complaint, President Hashim Thaçi announced a decision to prohibit the sale and distribution of these books. However, so far no administrative action has been undertaken and books such as Hitler's unannotated "Mein Kampf" can be still sold in bookstores without any regulation.

In recent years, the authorities have tried to show their appreciation for Jewish cultural heritage. The Jewish graveyard in Pristina has seen an increase in protection, and authorities have been quick to condemn any acts of vandalism in the form of graffiti. Furthermore, in May 2013 a memorial plaque was placed inside Kosovo's government building, commemorating the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The memorial plaque was erected where a synagogue once stood, in close proximity to a mosque and a Catholic church — all three were destroyed in the 1950s and 1960s by the Communist regime under the slogan "Destroy the old, build the new," thereby destroying Pristina's entire historical identity.[221] The Municipality of Pristina is now in the process of giving a parcel of land to the Jewish community to build a synagogue. State authorities also support plans for a Jewish Heritage Museum in Prizren, which seeks to document and memorialize the history of the Jewish community, its challenges and the efforts made by citizens to protect the Jews from Nazis during World War II.[222]

220 Gruber, Samuel. "Kosovo: Pristina's 'New' Jewish Cemetery has been restored as part of a heritage revitalization project sponsored by the E.U. and UNDP," December 2019. https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2019/12/17/kosovo-jewish-cemetery-in-pristina/.
221 European Stability Initiative and Kosovo Stability Initiative "A future for Prishtina's past," March 2006. esiweb.org/pdf/esi_future_of_pristina%20booklet_albanian.pdf.
222 Stephen Schwartz. "Kosovo Revives its Jewish Heritage," March 2013. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kosovo-revives-its-jewish-heritage_b_3379896.



Photo by Eraalickaj, CC BY-SA 3.0, of the current poor state of the Jewish graveyard in Pristina.

The level of antisemitism in Kosovo seems to be limited. Antisemitism in the media and society has been consistently monitored by state authorities. Some antisemitic sentiment and conspiracy theories exist in small segments of society. Kosovo's more conservative and radical Muslim communities accuse Israel of controlling the world, its security, financial and banking sectors, the health industry, etc.[223] Those in agreement with this narrative deny Israel's right to exist. Following the war in Kosovo, antisemitism increased as a result of the education of hundreds of Kosovo students in religious schools in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and other Muslim countries. Imams who were educated and trained in madrasas in the Gulf countries brought an antisemitic narrative back with them, which they passed on to their followers in Kosovo.[224] However, since 2015, Kosovo has started to monitor mainstream media and social media used by individuals and public figures for any elements of antisemitism or hate speech or promoting any form of violent extremism and terrorism.

Although Islamic conservative and radical movements attempt to use the Palestinian cause to gather support and increase the number of Muslim believers in the country, this narrative fails most of the time due to the Palestinian refusal to recognize Kosovo and its support of Serbia in its dispute with Kosovo. The narrative of Palestinians suffering under Israeli's oppression is used by radical imams to attract young Kosovars to join the ranks of the Islamic State group (ISIS) as foreign fighters, a task in which they have proved relatively successful.[225] Countries like Turkey have also tried to use Islamic sentiment to extend their influence in Kosovo. While not necessarily promoting extremist views, Turkish foreign policy has nevertheless treated Kosovo as its sphere of

223 Interview with Imam from Kosovo Islamic Association. Pristina, May 2020.
224 Përteshi, Skënder. "Kosova Resilience Index - Violent Extremism in Kosova: What community resilience can teach us?," October 2020.
225 Former Albanian commander on ISIS Lavdrim Muhaxheri requesting Albanians from Balkan to join him in ISIS.

influence, particularly under the direction of current Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

However, neither Turkey nor Saudi Arabia has been successful in pulling Kosovo toward their sphere of influence, due to high citizen support for E.U. and NATO integration (the highest in the region).[226] In this sense, antisemitism has also failed to take root in Kosovo because Kosovo's Albanian-majority population takes pride in having saved the Jewish population during the Holocaust. Moreover, the 1998–1999 conflict with Serbia in Kosovo was ended by the U.S.-led NATO bombing of Serbia. One of the dominant narratives in Kosovo in this regard is that it was the Jewish-American community that saved the people of Kosovo, mostly because of the Jewish heritage of then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, General Wesley Clark and Assistant Secretary of State James Rubin, who all played important roles in this NATO operation. Within the logic of this narrative, Kosovo people sympathize with Jewish people because Kosovars see themselves as victims of apartheid and ethnic cleansing suffered at the hands of Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia, thus drawing comparisons with what Jews suffered under Nazi Germany. These narratives are related in the historical sense, as well as in the sense of recent political developments and world affairs.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

Kosovo's legal framework is comprehensive and offers wide protection to various communities and minority groups. Although antisemitism is not specifically mentioned in the constitution and laws, this framework







Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (left), General Wesley Clark (center), and Former Assistant Secretary of State James Rubin (right).

226 European Parliament Think Tank "Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them." December 03, 2020. pp. 34, 38-39. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/653621/EXPO_STU(2020)653621_EN.pdf.

safeguards the rights of all citizens regardless of language, nationality, ethnicity or religion. Given that Kosovo is not part of the Council of Europe, its citizens have no right to file cases at the European Court of Human Rights.

The Constitution of Kosovo states: "Kosovo is a multi-ethnic society consisting of Albanian and other Communities, governed democratically with full respect for the rule of law through its legislative, executive and judicial institutions." It theoretically guarantees full and effective equality for all citizens. The entirety of chapter three is dedicated to the rights of communities and their members, and states that every member of a community can "freely choose to be treated or not to be treated as such."

Article 141 of Criminal Code no. 06/L-074 carries provisions for hate speech. The article explicitly states: "Whoever publicly incites or publicly spreads hatred, discord and intolerance between national, racial, religious, ethnic and other groups or based on sexual orientation, gender identity and other personal characteristics, in a manner which is likely to disturb the public order shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment of up to five (5) years."[227]

Law no. 03/L-047, on the protection and promotion of the rights of communities and their members, provides that they shall have the right to freely maintain, express and develop their culture and identity, and to preserve and enhance the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage. These communities are defined as national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups traditionally present in the Republic of Kosovo that are not in the majority.[228] Law no. 05/L-021 on protection from discrimination establishes a general framework for prevention and combating discrimination based on nationality, or in relation to any community, social origin, race, ethnicity and other categories.

There are no direct cases investigated by Kosovo law enforcement agencies related to antisemitic issues. However, in November 2016, a planned terrorist attack against the Israeli national soccer team, which was going to come to Albania for a 2018 World Cup qualification match, was prevented by Kosovo security authorities. The attack was inspired by the antisemitic narratives promoted by Islamic State propaganda and ideology, which managed to recruit hundreds of foreign fighters in Kosovo.[229] Kosovo's authorities arrested more than a dozen individuals suspected of planning simultaneous terrorist attacks in Kosovo and Albania.

In the 2018 OSCE-ODIHR hate crime report for Kosovo, there were 36 cases of racism and xenophobia against Muslims and Christians, which included damage to property, vandalism, physical assault, threats and bombing.

Support for victims and witnesses is provided only within the scope of Law no. 05/L-036 on crime-victim compensation, approved in 2015 by the Kosovo Assembly. The law regulates the right to financial compensation for victims of violent crimes and their dependents.[230] Legal, medical and

227 There are similar provisions in Article 4 of the Law on Religious Freedom in Kosovo, as well as Article 6 (8) of Law on the Protection and Promotion of Community Rights.
228 Kosovo Assembly Law No. 03/L-047 on the protection and promotion of the rights of communities and their members. Pristina, 2008.
229 Leposhtica, Labinot. Reporter.al. "Planet e Lavdrim Muhaxherit për të sulmuar futbollistët e Izraelit në ndeshjen me Shqipërinë," June 14, 2018. https://www.reporter.al/planet-e-lavdrim-muhaxherit-per-te-sulmuar-futbollistet-e-izraelit-ne-ndeshjen-me-shqiperine/.
230 Kosovo Assembly Law No. 05/L-036 on crime victim compensation. Pristina, 2015.

psycho-social support is provided to victims of human trafficking based on Law no. 04/L-218.[231]

There is no legislation in Kosovo that specifically regulates the issue of antisemitism. In September 2020, the government approved the decision to prevent and counter antisemitism in Kosovo and plans to draft appropriate legislation to this effect.

Institutional Mechanisms

Ombudsperson is a mechanism for promoting, monitoring and supporting equal treatment without discrimination on grounds protected by the Law on Gender Equality and the Anti-Discrimination Law. The ombudsperson receives complaints against public and private authorities on the grounds of discrimination (including hate speech), and has the right to initiate judicial proceedings and act as "amicus curiae" in judicial processes related to human rights, equality and protection from discrimination. It has often put cases before the Constitutional Court on matters pertaining to the rights of various groups and communities.

According to the "Kosovo Ombudsperson Annual Report for 2019," the largest number of complaints sent to the office were related to the right to impartial and fair trial, the right to legal remedies, and the right to work and practice the profession.[232] Around 136 complaints were registered under the legal basis of "prohibition of torture and the rights of the abused" against police and the correctional service.[233]

The Kosovo Police are regulated by the Law on Police, which also serves as one of the mechanisms through which citizens can report antisemitic incidents and other forms of hate speech. Given that the criminal code treats hate speech as an offense, it is the duty of the police to accept complaints, investigate the matter, and possibly prepare a lawsuit that will be subsequently sent to the prosecution. According to human rights reports in 2019 and 2020, there was no reporting of any antisemitic cases to the Kosovo Police. However, in the first seven months of the year, approximately 100 incidents were reported involving thefts, break-ins, verbal harassment, and damage to the property of Kosovo Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church.[234] Different local organizations and international presences in Kosovo reported that it was difficult to prove what inspired those incidents and attacks. Kosovo Police initiated investigations of all reported cases, which in some instances resulted in the arrest of perpetrators.[235]

In the past two years, there were many cases in which the Kosovo Police have been accused of negligence. One of the major scandals was the case of Vesel Veseli, a police officer and deputy chief of investigations in Drenas suspected of abusing his power to control and sexually abuse a helpless minor, 16 years old, who went to the police to seek help, while also denouncing her teacher for sexual abuse.[236]

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231 Kosovo Assembly Law No. 05/L-036- on preventing and combating trafficking in human being and protecting victims of trafficking. Pristina 2013.
232 Annual Report of Ombudsperson Institution of Kosova 2020.
233 U.S. Department of State, "Kosovo 2019 Human Rights Report," https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KOSOVO-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf.
234 Ibid.
235 Ibid.
236 Berisha, Kastriot. "The Case of a minor from Drenas, 6 accused of sexual assault," October 30, 2019. https://kallxo.com/ligji/rasti-i-te-mitures-nga-drenasi-6-te-akuzuar-per-keqperdorim-seksual/.

The Prosecution Office is also regulated by its own laws. In certain cases, citizens may choose to circumvent the police and go directly to the prosecution with a criminal charge based on a certain form of hate speech. It is then the duty of the prosecution to see if it can prove the existence of the offense, beyond any reasonable doubt, in order to put forth an indictment. As such, the prosecution also serves as a mechanism to respond to antisemitic incidents and forms of hate speech. It is the duty of the courts to decide on the indictments brought before them with regard to antisemitic incidents or other forms of hate speech. Courts, prosecution and police have not been serious in treating violence against women in Kosovo as a priority. Because of this neglect, and the lack of protection offered to women who were victims of domestic violence, many cases ended in murder. For instance, in October 2015, Zejnepe Bytyqi was stabbed to death in her home in Suhareka, a town in southwestern Kosovo. Her husband has been accused of murdering her. Her family said she had reported abuse from her husband to the police 16 times since 2002.[237]

There are two NGOs that work to foster relations between Albanians (in Kosovo and Albania) and Israel: the Kosovo-Israeli Friendship Association and BET Israel Kosova. The aim of these two organizations is to increase people-to-people cooperation between Jews and Albanians, and to highlight the rescue efforts of the local population to save Jews during the Holocaust. Both organizations are very active in countering antisemitism in Albanian-speaking territories in the Western Balkans and represent Kosovo at annual meetings of the World Jewish Congress.

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

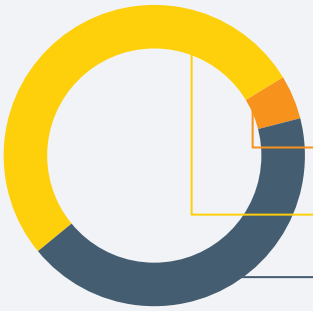
Media monitoring in Kosovo focused on Serbian, Kosovo Albanian and a limited number of Croatian sources (also read in Kosovo) in Serbian, Croatian and Albanian languages. Serbia-based and Albania-based sources were examined because they are also widely read in Kosovo. Researchers worked with 1,548 relevant online media pieces.[238] Out of this number, 811 reported on or commented on instances of antisemitism. In total, researchers spotted 16 **implicit** and 54 **explicit** antisemitic statements in 32 online media pieces. The rest of the relevant media pieces contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

> The Kosovo media space is **complex and reflects broader divisions.**

The Kosovo media space is complex and reflects the broader divisions that marred the Kosovo conflict since the 1990s and ensuing ethnic tensions and allegiances. Kosovo Albanians have their own media, which have declined both in standards and ethics in recent years, mostly due to financial strains that have limited the readership of mainstream media, but also due to click-bait-driven portals that can be followed in real time through almost Kosovo-wide internet coverage.

237 Marku, Hana. "For domestic abuse survivors, Kosovo's justice system can be fatal," June 13, 2016. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/for-domestic-abuse-survivors-kosovo-s-justice-system-can-be-fatal.
238 See section on Methodology: Categorization of Antisemitism.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 1,548 relevant media pieces:

- **4.5%** contained antisemitic statements
- **52.3%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **43.1%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

PHYSICAL | RHETORIC | SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:

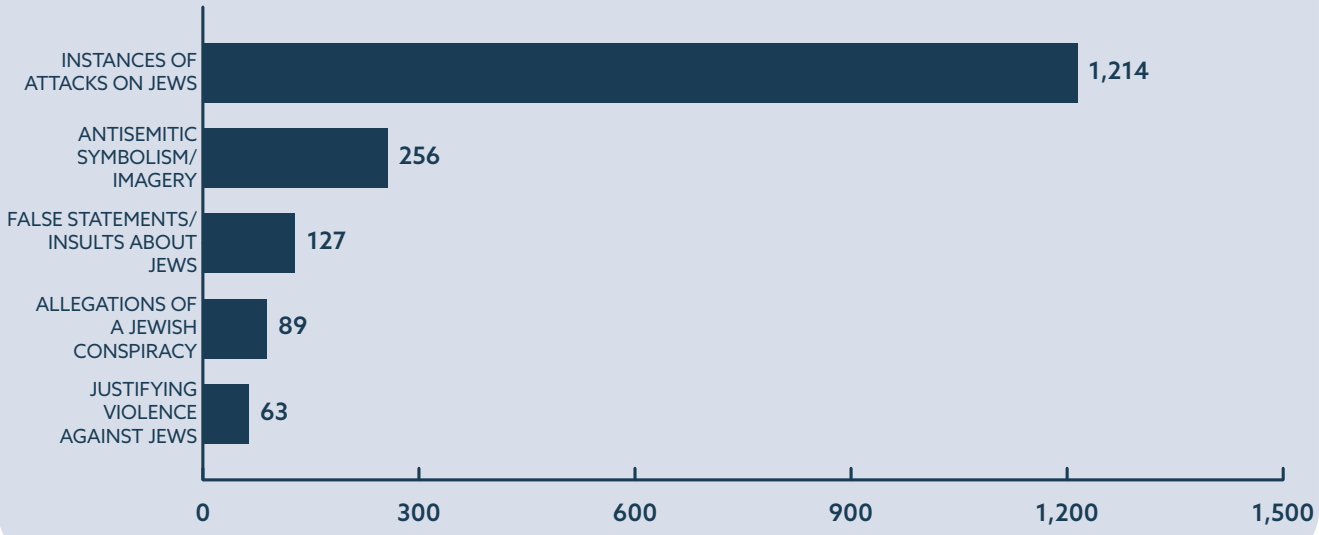


SYMBOLS: Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism; can involve literal symbols, and also instances of character tropes and comparisons.

FALSE: Making an untrue statement or spreading disinformation about Jews or Jewish institutions.

DENIAL: Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people during WWII.

Most frequent mentions:



There are several media outlets serving the Kosovo Serb audience. However, they are small in size and have a difficult time competing with bigger Belgrade-based media that cover events in Kosovo and abroad. Kosovo's public broadcaster has a channel in the Serbian language, which is mostly ignored by Kosovo Serbs, due to the perception that it toes the line of Kosovo authorities. Hence, Serbs in Kosovo rely on media from Serbia, among which the most popular are the pro-Serbian-government tabloids such as *kurir-rs* and the public broadcaster *RTS*.

Language is another factor that plays a role in media consumption. Kosovo Albanians speak Albanian, and most Kosovo Serbs do not understand or speak it, though that would make it much easier for them to understand Kosovo media. The reverse applies to Kosovo Albanians, a majority of whom do not speak Serbian — especially the younger generations — which makes it difficult to understand the news produced by Serbian media. There is little cross-border media consumption, even when language is not an issue, which is a problem on its own.

As most Albanian-language media based in Kosovo do not store or allow access to historical data, the results of Kosovo media monitoring were mainly from Serbian-based media that have a reach in Kosovo and are read by Kosovo Serbs.[239] With few exceptions, noted in the report, Kosovo-based Albanian-language mainstream media (traditional media such as TV and newspapers) have few instances of antisemitism in their coverage of events pertaining to Kosovo, the region or the Middle East.

The types of antisemitism discussed the most, as shown by the number of tags, were **physical** (1214 times), **conspiracy** (89 times), **false** (127 times), **denial** (100 times), **violence** (63 times), **symbols** (256 times) and **accusation** (24 times). Incidents of antisemitism spread by public figures (**AS-Public Figure**) were discussed in news eight times. Antisemitic statements were present 70 times and were most often related to **violence** (46 times) and **conspiracy** (25 times). In total, 54 instances belonged to the category of **explicit** antisemitic statements and 16 were categorized as **implicit**.

The antisemitic statements in Kosovo media were found mostly in under-article comments on news articles chronicling historical events focusing on the crimes against Jews during World War II, the present-day clashes between Serbs and Croats (related to the respective roles of Serbia and Croatia in supporting the Nazis and their respective persecution of Jews), and the clashes between Russia and Poland regarding Poland's support of Nazis during the Holocaust. This usually happened around annual events memorializing the Holocaust, whether in Jerusalem, Warsaw or international conferences on antisemitism and the Holocaust. There were also continuous diplomatic tensions between Croatia and Serbia. Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic accused Croatia of supporting Nazism and siding with Hitler, declaring "we did not carry out the Holocaust against the Jews and the Serbs, we did not force Croats to wear special markings such as those that Serbs and Jews were forced to wear during the Second World War."[240] Similar diplomatic tensions

239 Some media sources store published material for years, some only for a couple of months or weeks. Some sources archive their data, but limit their accessibility after a period of time. Media monitoring started in May 2020. Historical data in this research are articles, Facebook posts and under article discussion published between January 2019 and May 2020.

240 Dacic, Ivica. "Unlike Croatia, we never sided with Hitler," May 2, 2018. https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/27936-serbian-foreign-minister-unlike-croatia-we-never-sided-with-hitler.

prevailed between Russia and Poland regarding their roles during the war and the Holocaust — in particular during the meeting of world leaders in Auschwitz on the 70th anniversary of its liberation by Russian soldiers, which the Russian president did not attend.

In addition, some of the news items concerned the so-called "occupation of Al-Quds" by Israel, violence by Israel Defense Forces against Palestinian civilians, and the Israeli occupation of Al-Aqsa mosque. These were discussed in the media in connection with the decision by President Trump to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move the U.S. embassy there, dismissing the status quo and decades of peace talks to resolve the future of the divided city and the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Trump's decision regarding Jerusalem triggered a huge debate against the move on social media and in mainstream media. Online media also heavily reported on **rhetorical** and **property** attacks against Jews abroad or on frictions between Poland and Israel when Polish President Andrzej Duda was not invited to speak at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz, which was held in Jerusalem.[241] The killing of former Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in a U.S. military attack in Iraq was also mentioned in the media, and Israel was accused as the mastermind of the attack. Other instances of antisemitic statements focused on the role of the Jewish diaspora and businessmen in the banking sector, oil companies, and media in the United States, Russia and the European Union. In these statements, Israel was portrayed as controlling the world's business and financial sectors, and corrupting and controlling politicians and governments around the world.

Antisemitic Narratives

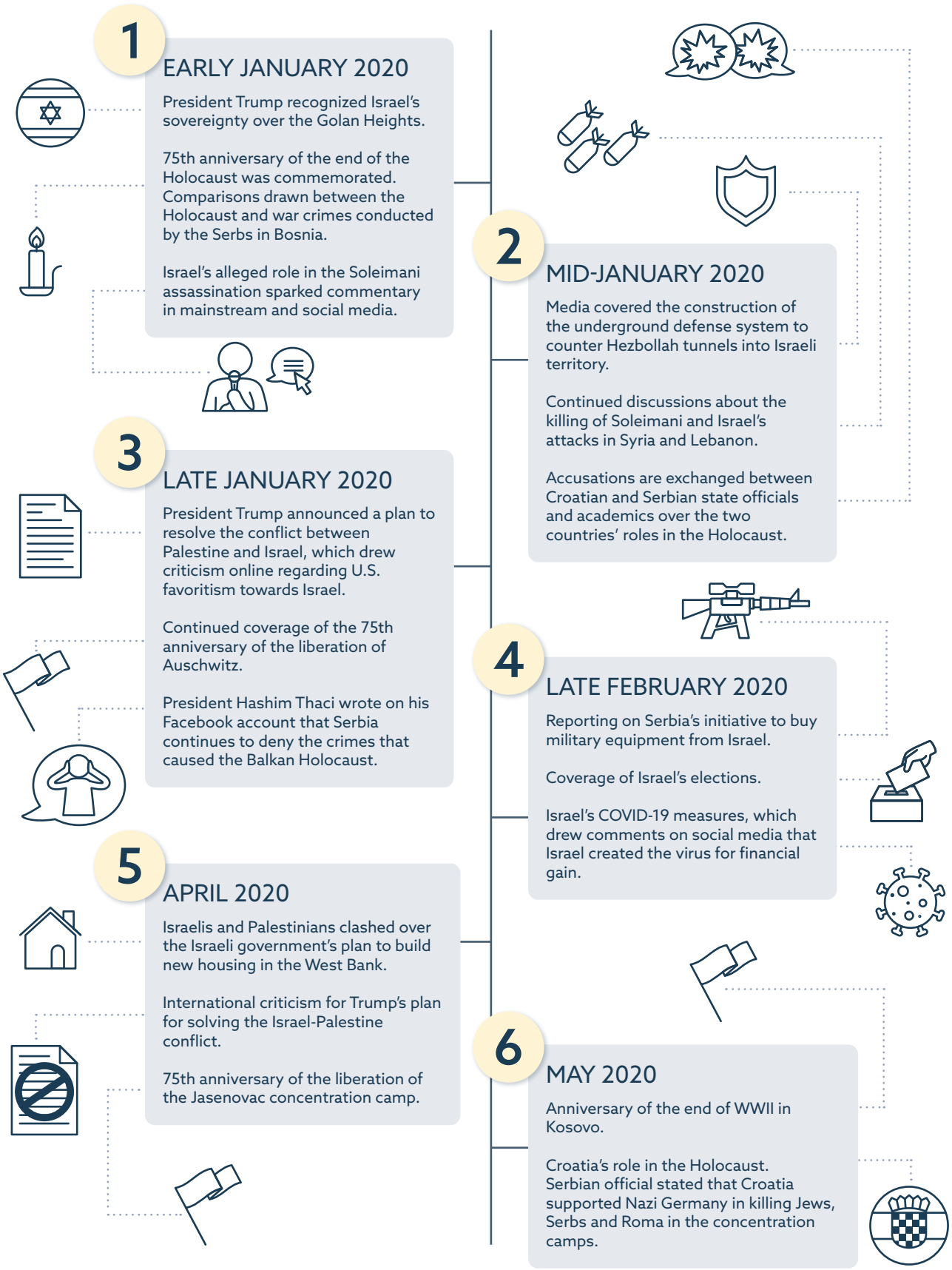
Apart from a few articles containing symbolic antisemitic rhetoric, false and vulgar statements about Jews and conspiracies related to the role of Jews in controlling the world through the financial sector, there were some elements of antisemitism regarding the Holocaust and the history of the Jews. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been an important narrative trigger of antisemitic mentions in the media. Antisemitic comments were almost exclusively related to developments in the Middle East, in particular whenever a conflict between Israelis and Palestinians broke out.

It is hard to identify the target audience of antisemitic narratives. The conservative media and communities in the regions are more vulnerable to or more active in producing and promoting antisemitic elements. The younger generations, which have limited knowledge about the Holocaust and antisemitism, could be pushed toward antisemitism due to their limited command of the issues. In the case of Kosovo, those who have extreme religious beliefs tend to support antisemitism, in particular on social media platforms. Some individuals from this community have also participated in the religious-inspired conflicts in Syria and Iraq as volunteers for violent extremist organizations such as ISIS. It is hard

In Kosovo's case, those who have extreme religious beliefs **support antisemitism on social media platforms.**

241 "Polish President Duda boycotts rally in Jerusalem against anti-Semitism," *Sloboden Pecat*, January 23, 2020. https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/polskiot-pretsedatel-duda-go-bojkotira-sobirot-vo-erusalim-protiv-antisemitizmot/.

Peaks in Media Monitoring



1 EARLY JANUARY 2020

President Trump recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust was commemorated. Comparisons drawn between the Holocaust and war crimes conducted by the Serbs in Bosnia.

Israel's alleged role in the Soleimani assassination sparked commentary in mainstream and social media.

2 MID-JANUARY 2020

Media covered the construction of the underground defense system to counter Hezbollah tunnels into Israeli territory.

Continued discussions about the killing of Soleimani and Israel's attacks in Syria and Lebanon.

Accusations are exchanged between Croatian and Serbian state officials and academics over the two countries' roles in the Holocaust.

3 LATE JANUARY 2020

President Trump announced a plan to resolve the conflict between Palestine and Israel, which drew criticism online regarding U.S. favoritism towards Israel.

Continued coverage of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

President Hashim Thaci wrote on his Facebook account that Serbia continues to deny the crimes that caused the Balkan Holocaust.

4 LATE FEBRUARY 2020

Reporting on Serbia's initiative to buy military equipment from Israel.

Coverage of Israel's elections.

Israel's COVID-19 measures, which drew comments on social media that Israel created the virus for financial gain.

5 APRIL 2020

Israelis and Palestinians clashed over the Israeli government's plan to build new housing in the West Bank.

International criticism for Trump's plan for solving the Israel-Palestine conflict.

75th anniversary of the liberation of the Jasenovac concentration camp.

6 MAY 2020

Anniversary of the end of WWII in Kosovo.

Croatia's role in the Holocaust. Serbian official stated that Croatia supported Nazi Germany in killing Jews, Serbs and Roma in the concentration camps.

to estimate how these narratives were received by the targeted audiences. However, judging from their comments, political affiliations and attitudes, it may be said that such rhetoric worked very well with them.

The majority of reports in the **first time peak** at the beginning of January 2020 revolved around President Trump's decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and reactions to this decision from the countries in the region, as well as Russia and the E.U. The majority of the rest of the news reports were related to the government's decision to build around 2,000 apartments in Palestinian-dominated East Jerusalem. This initiative was supported by the U.S. administration, which argued that it was Israel's right to decide its internal issues.

The 75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust was one of the main events in the first media peak. The event was organized in Jerusalem with many world leaders in attendance. Parallels were drawn between the dispute over Kosovo and the Palestinian territories, including discussions about Kosovo's non-recognition by Israel and Serbia's recognition of Palestine. Israel has since recognized Kosovo's independence, but outside the timeframe of the media-monitoring period.

Comparisons between the Holocaust as a genocide and war crimes conducted by the Serbs in Bosnia, especially in Srebrenica, were drawn by discussants in under-article comments (especially in the cases of articles debating the role of Croats and Serbs in World War II). The question raised in the comments was why the Holocaust was not recognized as a genocide, when the Hague court had ruled that the Srebrenica massacre was a genocide.

The role of Israel in escalating the security situation in the Middle East was also a source of antisemitic comments and conspiracies. Israeli Jews were called "the Zionists" and portrayed as fomenters of a total war, following a belief that after the destruction, Israel and its people would survive and rise to world domination. The killing of Soleimani was also mentioned during the first peak. Israel's alleged role in the assassination was often discussed and commented upon in mainstream and social media.[242] The social media discussants also believed that Soleimani's assassination by U.S. forces bore the hallmark of U.S. and "Zionist" collaboration.

In the **second time peak** in mid-January 2020, media significantly covered the construction of Israel's underground defense system to counter the building of Hezbollah tunnels into Israeli territory. Part of the news coverage was also related to an Israel-Lebanon dispute over their maritime border and its potential for sparking another war between Israel and Hezbollah. Tensions between Iran and the United States after the killing of Soleimani, and Israel's continuous attacks in Syria were also covered.[243] The exchange of accusations between Croatian and Serbian state officials and academics over the two countries' roles in the Holocaust and in the persecution of Jews, Serbs and Roma were also present in the media. The visit of Albania's President Ilir Meta to Israel for events marking the 75th

242 For more see: Redakcija Logicno. "HITNA VIJEST: Vladimir Putin's visit to Assad and Damascus – What is that message?," January 7, 2020. https://www.logicno.com/politika/hitna-vijest-vladimir-putin-iznenada-posjetio-assada-u-damasku-sto-je-htio-poruciti.html.

243 For more, see: Alo! "Have you ever seen a sea of people like this in your life, Trump? Iranian ballistic missiles set off for Syria, Israel will be razed to the ground! This is the end of America's malignant presence!," January 6, 2020. https://www.alo.rs/vesti/svet/iranske-balisticke-rakete-krenule-za-siriju-izrael-ce-biti-sravnjen-sa-zemljom-ovo-je-kraj-malignom-prisustvu-amerike-video/278651/vest.

anniversary of defeating Nazism in Europe was also discussed in Kosovo media.[244]

Online media also reported on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, a date that was marked by the Kosovo Parliament, governmental bodies, independent state mechanisms and political parties. There were also reports of Serbia's President Aleksandar Vučić attending commemorations in Israel at Yad Vashem and the appearance of Nazi swastikas in a Serbian town at the same time. Serbian media also reported about World War II crimes in Croatia against Jews, Roma and Serbs.[245] Antisemitic and anti-Israel comments by readers and commentators on the Facebook pages of certain media were related to Israel's bombing of military targets in Syria and Lebanon, and the ongoing incidents in the Palestinian territories.[246]

In the **third media peak** at the end of January, President Trump's plan to resolve the conflict between Palestine and Israel, dubbed "the deal of the century," was reported in Kosovo's media.[247] The general view shared in the media was that the plan favored Israel and did not address the main concerns of the Palestinians. The plan was rejected by the Palestinian authorities, who said they would not be an implementing party to President Trump's plan. In social media, discussants blamed Israel and the United States for the design of the plan, arguing that it was a Jewish blueprint to gain control of global assets.

The marking of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was again covered in the media. News items on Poland's decision not to invite the Russian president to commemorations in Poland, following the tensions between the two countries over Poland's role in World War II, dominated media coverage.[248] During this media-monitoring period there were media reports about the initiative to open the Vatican archives on the Pontificate of Pius XII, who was accused of tacitly supporting the Nazi extermination of six million Jews.

Kosovo President Hashim Thaci caused some stir when he wrote on his Facebook account that Serbia continues to deny the crimes that caused the "Balkan Holocaust" in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Thaci's statement received lots of coverage in the media during this monitoring period. Serbia's envoy for Kosovo, Marko Djurić, reacted to the statement by saying it showed supreme distaste and was uncivilized for trying to introduce the term "Balkan Holocaust" into public communication by comparing Serbs to Nazis and Albanians to Jews.[249]

The **fourth media peak** at the end of February was dominated by Serbia's initiative to buy weapons and other military equipment from Israel. Vučić hailed the agreement as the first of many between

244 Albanian Daily News. "Albanians that saved Jews, Exemplary; Israeli President," January 22, 2020. https://albaniandailynews.com/news/38867.
245 Beograd, Serna. "Vuvic talked to Nentayahu: Friendship between Serbia and Israel confirmed," September 11, 2020. http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a638916/Vucic-razgovarao-s-Netanjahuom-Potvrdjeno-prijateljstvo-Srbije-i-Izraela.html.
246 Aadolu Agency Shqip. "Israeli forces killed one civilian from Palestine," September 18, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluAgencyShqip/videos/1602331216558681.
247 PortAlb. Nentayahu: Trump's Plan, an opportunity that is captured once in history," January 26, 2020. https://portalb.mk/662026-netanyahu-plani-i-trumpit-mundesi-qe-kapet-nje-here-ne-histori/.
248 MOCT. "Brnabic at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz," January 26, 2020. https://www.tvmost.info/post/brnabic-na-obelezavanju-75-godina-od-oslobodenja-ausvica.
249 President Thaqi declaration on his facebook profile "Thaqi – Serbia ende mohon krimet qe shkaktuan holokaustin ballkanik," January 27, 2020. https://telegrafi.com/thaci-serbia-ende-mohon-krimet-qe-shkaktuan-holokaustin-ballkanik/.

Serbia and Israel on high-tech military equipment. The media also reported about Vučić's intentions to open a diplomatic mission and economic office in Jerusalem. During this period, Israel's parliamentary elections resulted in increased coverage of Israel in the media. COVID-19 and measures taken by the Israeli government to manage the pandemic were also reported in the media. Another covered topic was Vučić's participation in the annual meeting of the American-Jewish Committee (AIPAC), and the above-mentioned initiative to open Vatican archives. Many discussants on social media platforms commented that Israel created the coronavirus and was making efforts to produce a COVID-19 vaccine for financial gain.

During the **fifth media peak** in April 2020, clashes between Israelis and Palestinians over the Israeli government's plan to build new houses in the West Bank were frequently discussed in the media. So were international criticism of Trump's plan for solving the Israel-Palestine conflict and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Jasenovac concentration camp.[250]

In the **sixth peak**, in May 2020, the focus was on May 5, the anniversary of the end of World War II in Kosovo. The liberation of Jasenovac and other concentration camps in Croatia during the war was also covered. Croatia's role in the Holocaust was quite present in the mainstream media and social media during this time peak.[251] On the occasion of the remembrance of the victims of the war and the Holocaust, many world leaders were quoted discussing the threat of rising antisemitism in Western Europe. Probably the most interesting news of this period was the statement of the Serbian minister of foreign affairs, who said that Croatia supported Nazi Germany in killing Jews, Serbs and Roma in concentration camps, while Croat representatives tried to argue back.[252] Also, Israeli air attacks against Hezbollah, Syrian forces and Iranian forces in Syria received broad coverage. Military clashes between Israel and Hamas were also mentioned in this period. So were antisemitic narratives and conspiracies against Israel. Some discussants expressed an opinion that the United Arab Emirates and its leader, Mohamed bin Zayed, were working with Zionists, the United States, Saudi Arabia and terrorist organizations to conduct attacks in Turkey and against Turkey's allies in the region.

Sources and Countries Mentioned

The majority of monitored media were Serbia-based sources also active in Kosovo that may have had an impact on Serbian communities there. The majority of antisemitic narratives were manifested through comments on Facebook pages and under-article discussions in various media outlets.

The names of the seven most active media outlets (Serbian-based mainstream and popular media with reach in Kosovo) that produced the biggest number of articles discussing events/incidents related to Israel, Jewish people or antisemitism were: *B-92.net*, Aleksandar Vučić — Facebook, *Vecernji list*, *Danas-rs*, *Politika-rs*, *Logicno-com*, and *Rs-N1info.com*. Other active sources were Croatian-based mainstream media *direktno-hr* and *nacional-hr* and Albanian-based *shqiptarja-com*.

250 AlJazeera. "Israeli government plan to built new apartments in West Bank," May 24, 2018. http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/izrael-planira-2500-novih-kuca-na-zapadnoj-obali.
251 Karganovic, Stephen. "Jasenovac – the Glossed over Auschwitz of the Balkans," May 2, 2020. https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2020/05/02/jasenovac-glossed-over-auschwitz-of-balkans/.
252 Milekic, Sven. "Croatia's Jasenovac Death Toll: A political Numbers game," January 31, 2018. https://balkaninsight.com/2018/01/31/croatia-s-jasenovac-death-toll-a-political-numbers-game-01-31-2018/

The media that produced the biggest number of articles containing antisemitic content were Serbian-based media with a reach in Kosovo: *Danas-rs*, *Politika-rs Logicno-com*, *Rs-N1info.com*, *k-com*, *Mondo-rs*, *republika-rs*, *espresso-rs*, *Rs- lat*. *sputniknews.com*, and *Srbijadanas.com*. Another active source was Albanian-based *shqiptarja-com*.

Israel was the most-mentioned country, named 176 times, followed by the United Kingdom, the United States and the E.U. The United States was almost always mentioned in relation to Israel and related developments in the Middle East. Iran and the Arab countries were commonly mentioned when there was a crisis in the region. The E.U. and Russia were mentioned much less, although they were also involved in the same regional developments. When it came to antisemitic statements, the country mentioned the most was Israel, followed by the U.K., Poland, Russia, the United States, Croatia, Germany, France, Serbia and Iran. The United States and the U.K. were mentioned as countries that established the state of Israel and were protecting it. Russia, Serbia, Poland, Croatia and Germany were mentioned in relation to World War II and the Holocaust. Arab countries were mentioned due to military clashes with Israel and alleged efforts to destroy it.

Some elements of religious-based extremism (Islamist and Orthodox) were present in Kosovo using different extremist narratives to increase the radicalization process among the communities in Kosovo and to affect political developments in the country. Although limited in presence in Kosovo media (in Albanian) and in Serbian media to some extent, antisemitic narratives could increase the radicalization of both societies.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

The presence of antisemitism in Kosovo is limited. However, there are currently gaps in media literacy and general knowledge about the Holocaust, especially among Kosovo youth, and narratives of Palestinian suffering under Israel's oppression are regularly mentioned in the media and on social media platforms. These could have the potential to be used by radical movements to increase or inspire antisemitism in Kosovo. There is no Kosovo-based organized group or media platform that focuses specifically on promoting antisemitism in Kosovo. But media from other countries in the region (such as Serbia and North Macedonia) have a reach in Kosovo and influence Kosovo communities. Kosovo-based media have dedicated very limited coverage to antisemitism and antisemitic statements. These statements are, however, present in other regional media consumed in Kosovo. This is especially the case in the Serbian-language, Belgrade-based media. However, it is important to mention that the Kosovo media space produces less content than bigger markets in Serbia and North Macedonia, and the amount of antisemitic content in these countries is higher, in comparison with Kosovo.

In Kosovo it is easy to access literature that proclaims religious-based extremism, including antisemitism, though this literature is not controlled by state authorities. Youth in the E.U. and Balkan countries have limited knowledge about the Holocaust and antisemitism. Although there is no group or organization that promotes antisemitism in Kosovo media, extremism promoted online could have a direct impact on youth and increase their extremist views on antisemitism. In the region and Kosovo, many citizens are falling victims to fake news and propaganda about hate crimes, extremism and antisemitism.

There are ethnic tensions in the Western Balkans, particularly between the Croats and the Serbs, the Albanians and the Serbs, and the Albanians and the Macedonians. Some countries that protected Jews during World War II (particularly Albania and Kosovo) feel proud about their approach during this period in history, although their narrative does not always correspond with the historical facts. There are clashes between Serbs and Croats about the role that each country played during the Holocaust, while Serbs accuse Croats of supporting the Nazis during that time. These narratives and other antisemitic elements increase ethnic clashes between the Serbs and the Croats. However, antisemitic narratives do not have any effect on ethnic relations between different ethnicities living in Kosovo.

Conclusion

Antisemitic narratives in Kosovo were present both in the news and on Facebook. They took the form of conspiracy theories about the purported power of Jews to control the world, which were a pronounced feature of media and social networks in the Serbian language. Both Serbia and Croatia use antisemitism in political clashes on the regional and international levels due to their historical narratives of World War II and the Balkan wars of the 1990s. The Serbian government, and media friendly to it, seek to use the suffering of Serbs, Jews and other minorities under the rule of the Nazi-aligned Croatian government against Croatia today, while Croatia accuses Serbia of crimes against Croats in the wars of the 1990s. Therefore, depending on the issue at hand, each country tries try to identify with "the Jews" in the sense of shared victimhood and accusing the other party of having been the perpetrator of the crimes against them (to an extent, this is the case for all Balkan countries). The dominant narrative in Kosovo is that the Albanians were the only nation to have protected the Jewish people during the war. However, this is more accurate for Albania than Kosovo and, historically speaking, the issue is much more complex than this narrative.

The overarching narratives present in Kosovo society are support of the West, alliance with the E.U. and "the eternal friendship" with the United States. The good relations with the Jewish community and remembrance of supporting Jews during World War II are embedded in this overarching pro-Western narrative, as can be seen in the relationship of Kosovo society with the American Jewish community during the NATO interventions in the region in 1999. This overarching narrative has been challenged by anti-Western narratives spread by radical Islamist movements and international stakeholders trying to gain more influence in the region. Although antisemitism is limited to certain more radical religious elements in Kosovo, there are some steps that Kosovo authorities could take to eradicate it, as well as to curb the influence of countries like Russia and China that influence the Kosovo-Serb community by spreading fake news and propaganda.

As a first step, Kosovo should reinitiate its annual Interfaith Dialogue Conference, which was successful in bringing together faith-community leaders from around the world, local politicians, foreign diplomats, academics and civil society representatives. Through this conference, which was held for five years in a row, Jewish, Islamic and Christian faith leaders from around the world gathered in Pristina to discuss the importance of interfaith dialogue in nurturing harmony and coexistence between different domestic faith communities, at a time when extremist and violent ideologies were on the rise.

Secondly, Kosovo authorities — in cooperation with local Serb communities

and leaders and relevant institutions — should work toward curbing the influence of disinformation, fighting fake news and propaganda through community-based initiatives and involving young people through a bottom-up approach.

Montenegro

The Jewish community in Montenegro is small, but traditionally has good relations with both the Montenegrin people and the authorities. Antisemitism is not a substantial presence in society or the media. There are rare examples of antisemitic statements appearing in public, as well as discussions on portals and social networks that contain explicit antisemitism.

The legislative framework contains a robust set of anti-discrimination provisions that are consistent with international norms. Norms against discrimination on the basis of national, ethnic, racial and religious affiliation, or belonging to a minority people, are codified in Montenegro's constitution and prohibited under specific laws. Antisemitism is covered by a broad set of anti-discrimination norms, and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination mentions antisemitism in the definition of hate speech. Effective law enforcement around hate speech and hate crimes remains a problem. To help solve this problem, Montenegro should first update and harmonize its legislative code in the field of human rights and anti-discrimination.

The problem with monitoring of hate or discriminatory acts is that judicial statistics are recorded cumulatively, so it is not possible to obtain precise data on the number of crimes or misdemeanors in an individual category such as antisemitism.



Judicial statistics do not distinguish hate crimes, although the criminal code considers them a qualified form of crime. Hate crime victim protection structures are not developed in Montenegro, though the state has established protection mechanisms for victims of violent extremism.

Articles published in the Montenegrin media mainly report on news from international sources. Mentions of the Jewish community rise during significant dates, such as Holocaust Remembrance Day. The media sometimes report on conflicts between Israel and Palestine, as well as relations between the United States and Israel.



Historical Overview

Historically, the Jewish presence in Montenegro has been marginal, and there is no record of antisemitism. During World War II, a few hundred Serbian Jews fled to Montenegro, where Italian occupying authorities had them transferred to Italy and Albania under Italian occupation. Along with the German and Italian occupation from 1941-1945, Montenegro itself was engulfed in the civil war between the Communist-led Partisans and Serbian nationalist and monarchist Četniks. The latter embraced Nazi antisemitic discourse and spread it in their publications, targeting one of the top Partisan leaders in Montenegro, originally a Belgrade Jew, Moša Pijade, and presenting Partisans as a Jewish conspiracy.

In 2012, for the first time in history, a small Jewish community was founded in Montenegro. Since its independence, Montenegro also established diplomatic relations with Israel. Politically, Montenegro is still dominated by the conflict between pro-Serbian Montenegrins and independentists. The nationalist discourse that dominates the media and everyday life is always in danger of inflaming antisemitism.

The Jewish Minority in Montenegro Today

It is estimated that fewer than 300 Jews remained in Montenegro after World War II, though it is hard to discern exactly how many Jews or people of Jewish descent live in the country today. Although there is a great deal of multiculturalism in the country, there are occasional narratives that the Holocaust, and all the horrors that have befallen the Jewish people throughout history, have their source in the interpretation that the Jewish people are to blame for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. These narratives have been perpetuated by the Orthodox Church of Montenegro in some instances.

The Jewish community in Montenegro is one of the smallest in the world, with only approximately 300 estimated today according to the Jewish Community of Montenegro's reporting. Of the approximately 300 Jews in Montenegro,

some 100 remain in contact with the community leaders.[255] They celebrate all major holidays, despite the fact that there is no synagogue in Montenegro. At the end of January 2012, the Jewish community and the government signed the Act on Mutual Relations, which allows Jews to enjoy complete freedom to practice their religion, provided they do not violate the law. Additionally, after Montenegro declared independence, the country established diplomatic relations with Israel.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

Montenegro is a democratic civil state with respect to social justice, and based on the rule of law.[256] All citizens are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of rights and freedoms. Montenegro has ratified key international human rights treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and Protocol 12 (which refers to general prohibition of discrimination), the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It has also ratified the chief instruments for the protection of minority rights of the Council of Europe, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the Convention on Antidiscrimination of the International Labor Organization. As for hate speech, Montenegro has ratified the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalization of acts of racism and xenophobia committed through computer systems. Montenegro is not a member of IHRA.

The constitution prohibits the incitement or encouragement of hatred on any grounds, and prohibits any direct or indirect discrimination. It specifically protects the rights and freedoms of minorities and their identity. Members of minorities may exercise, protect and publicly express their national, ethnic, cultural or religious identity.[257] Any violation of the rights of both constitutionally recognized and other minorities is unlawful and punishable by law.[258]

The criminal code defines a number of criminal offenses relating to the violation of equality, free expression of national or ethnic affiliation, human rights and freedoms. Discrimination is specifically defined as the criminal offense of "racial and other discrimination". The definition of a criminal offense "provoking ethnic, racial and religious hatred" entails punishment for whoever publicly incites violence or hatred toward a group or a member of a group defined by virtue of race, skin color, religion, origin, nationality or ethnic affiliation. Apart from incorporating standalone anti-discrimination criminal offenses, the criminal code stipulates that if a crime was motivated by hatred, this shall be considered a particularly aggravating circumstance in sentencing.[259]

The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination defines hate speech as "any form of expression of ideas, statements, information and opinions that spreads, stirs up, encourages or justifies discrimination,

255 Ofner Bokan, Nina. "Jewish Community of Montenegro: About Us," April 27, 2021. http://www.jevzajcg.me/
256 The Constitution of Montenegro, Article 1.
257 The Constitution of Montenegro, Article 79.
258 The Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms ("Official Gazette of MNE", No 31/2006, 51/2006 – decision of the CC and 38/2007 and "Official Gazette of MNE ", No 2/2011, 8/2011 – rev. 31/2017).
259 Criminal Code of Montenegro, Article 42a.

hatred or violence against a person or group of persons because of their personal characteristics, xenophobia, racial hatred, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed in the form of nationalism, discrimination and hostility against minorities."[260] Hate speech is punishable by a fine.[261] The Law on Public Order and Peace recognizes hate speech as a misdemeanor against the public order and peace in a public space. Montenegrin legislation governing the area of non-discrimination is in line with E.U. directives.[262] Anti-discrimination norms on grounds of national, ethnic, racial and religious affiliation, or belonging to a minority, can also be found in the labor code, the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, the Law on Media, the Law on the Election of Councilors and Members of Parliament, the Law on Health Care and the Law on Legal Aid, and others.

Judicial statistics collate different categories of discrimination, making it impossible to obtain precise data on how many crimes or misdemeanors were committed on each of the individual grounds. Also, judicial statistics do not treat hate crimes separately, although the criminal code considers hate crimes a qualified form of criminal offense. According to Judicial Council data, in the 2017–2020 period, a single conviction was handed down for inciting national, racial and religious hatred, with a suspended sentence imposed. The crime was committed via social media and the sentence was below the legal minimum.[263] The judgment is publicly available.[264] Prosecutorial Council data are somewhat more substantial, but also lack information on acts motivated by hatred, and do not distinguish between national, religious or racial hatred as motives for committing an offense. The grounds for discrimination are also not broken down in prosecutorial statistics.[265] In the course of 2019, two persons were reported for racial and other discrimination.[266] As many as eight were reported for inciting national, racial and religious hatred.[267] In 2018, reports were filed against eight people for committing crimes of racial and other discrimination.[268] There were three reports of stirring national, racial and religious hatred.[269] In 2017, two people were reported for committing the criminal offense of inciting national, racial and religious hatred.[270] Two more persons were reported for committing the crime of racial and other discrimination.[271] The majority of criminal charges were dismissed, and only one ended in a conviction.

Even almost 10 years after the adoption of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, legal practitioners — including law enforcement and judiciary bodies — remain insufficiently familiar with the legal concepts and systems of protection against discrimination. Ignorance of discrimination

260 The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, Article 9a ("Official Gazette of MNE", No 46/2010, 40/2011 – state law, 18/2014 and 42/2017).
261 The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, Article 34a ("Official Gazette of MNE", No 46/2010, 40/2011 – state law, 18/2014 and 42/2017).
262 Particularly relevant for the area covered by this report is the Directive 2000/43 / EC on the application of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
263 Criminal Code of Montenegro, Article 370.
264 CP 262/2018 Podgorica High Court.
265 Performance reports of the Prosecutorial Council for 2017, 2018 and 2019.
266 Criminal Code, Article 443.
267 Criminal Code, Article 370.
268 Criminal Code, Article 443.
269 Criminal Code, Article 370.
270 Criminal Code, Article 370.
271 Criminal Code, Article 443

Legal Gaps in Legislation



Judicial statistics do not treat hate crimes separately from other categories of discrimination



General lack of data on acts of hatred; data does not distinguish between national, religious, or racial hatred



Legal practitioners are insufficiently familiar with legal concepts/systems of protection against discrimination



Intolerance and hatred toward Jews as a religious group or nation have not been specifically defined

by law enforcement bodies complicates prosecution of crimes and misdemeanors, and limits access to the protection and support available to victims of discrimination. As it is not used very often, the victim- and witness-protection system has not yet been fully developed.

The umbrella law that systematically addresses the issue of discrimination is the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination.[272] The law tackles various manifestations of discrimination, models of institutional protection (Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, Judicial Protection, Inspection Supervision) and the manner of exercising protection. The promotion of equality is envisaged as a preventive mechanism, which is in line with E.U. directives that govern this area.[273]

Montenegrin legislation tackles antisemitism through a set of anti-discrimination provisions. However, intolerance and hatred toward Jews as a religious group or nation have not been specifically defined. Only the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination mentions antisemitism in the very definition of hate speech.[274]

Institutional Mechanisms

The core mechanisms for protecting human rights and freedoms are the institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, the judiciary, and inspection services. There are also a number of institutions involved in the protection of human rights, which strive to reduce discrimination in Montenegrin society — including the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of Montenegro, the Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information and the Council for Civilian Control of Police Work in Montenegro. Although Montenegro has been working to improve and harmonize human-rights and anti-discrimination legislation, effective protection has yet to be put in place. Implementation of legislation remains weak and institutional capacity

272 The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, Art. 2 ("Official Gazette of MNE", No 46/2010, 40/2011 – state law, 18/2014 and 42/2017).
273 Directive 2000/43/EC.
274 The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, Article 9a.

needs to be increased.[275] There is a real need for training of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement.[276] Hate speech and hate crimes are not counteracted by imposing effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.[277]

Montenegro is formally involved in OSCE hate crime data collection and monitoring, but no data are available in OSCE's public database. This most likely means Montenegrin institutions have never submitted the data to OSCE. Instead, it has been noted that Montenegro failed to periodically report to the ODIHR on the number of hate crimes recorded by the police. As for OSCE-ODIHR hate crime statistics, three NGOs have filed reports citing threats and attacks against members of the LGBTQI+ community, as well as one report on account of racism and xenophobia.

The interests of Jews in Montenegro are represented by the Jewish community, whose representatives believe that Montenegro is one of the few countries that has provided refuge to Jews when it was most difficult for them. In order to raise awareness about the Holocaust and all forms of xenophobia and genocide, numerous public events were organized, and the cooperation of the Jewish community with institutions in Montenegro was assessed as good.

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

Media monitoring in Montenegro focused on Montenegrin and Serbian sources in both languages. Researchers worked with 1,842 relevant online media pieces.[278] Of this number, 192 reported on or referred to instances of antisemitism. In total, 29 relevant online media pieces spread **explicit** or **implicit** forms of antisemitism. The remaining media pieces contributed to general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

Rhetorical forms of antisemitism were covered by online media most often. In media pieces reporting or commenting on antisemitic incidents, **denial** appeared 43 times, **violence** 30 times, **symbols** 31 times, **conspiracy** six times and **accusation** 24 times. Besides that, online media also covered 55 instances of **physical** antisemitism and 18 instances of antisemitism in **rhetoric** and actions of **public figures**. Some of the **AS-Public Figure** tags represented articles in which Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro angered the Israeli public by saying that crimes committed during World War II were forgivable.[279] Another example was the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, General Hossein Salami, who declared that the destruction of Israel "is no longer just a dream, but a goal at hand."[280] Antisemitic statements most often took the form of **violence** (12 times) or **denial** (eight times).

Articles appearing in the Montenegrin media mainly carried reports from foreign

275 Montenegro 2019 Report, European Commission, 29.05.2019.
276 The 2019 Performance Report of the Prosecutorial Council and the State Prosecutor's Office, the 2019 Performance Report of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms.
277 The 2019 Performance Report of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms.
278 See section on Methodology: Categorization of Antisemitism.
279 Vijesti. "Bolsonaro sparked outrage in Israel with statement about the Holocaust," April 14, 2019. https://www.vijesti.me/svijet/globus/381795/bolsonaro-izazvao-bijes-u-izraelu-izjavom-o-holokaustu.
280 Vijesti. "Salami: The destruction of Israel is no longer just a dream, but a goal at hand," September 30, 2019. https://www.vijesti.me/svijet/globus/403083/salami-unistenje-izraela-vise-nije-samo-san-vec-cilj-koji-je-na-dohvat-ruke.

media and were of informative content (the transmission of a statement or a description of events) in which there were no elements of hate speech at the national level. They mostly referred to the role of the United States in relations between Israel and Palestine. Several articles were dedicated to Trump's peace plan. There were frequent narratives comparing the Srebrenica genocide to the Holocaust. There were also several articles related to International Holocaust Remembrance Day, as well as the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The monitoring found only 29 **explicit** or **implicit** antisemitic statements. The reason for this may be the fact that antisemitism was not widespread in Montenegro, due to very few links between the Jewish community and national identity issues that could direct hate speech and discrimination. However, another reason was the fact that the limited number of Montenegrin Facebook sources available in *>versus<* didn't produce any relevant content. However, as IRI learned in other project countries, Facebook was usually an important source of antisemitic statements.

Antisemitic Narratives

There were no observed original antisemitic narratives in Montenegro. A number of media pieces proudly pointed out that antisemitism has never been present in Montenegro.[281] An example of antisemitism with a local context was a statement by Montenegrin Metropolitan Amfilohije Radovic. Commenting on the president of Montenegro, he stated that those who today govern the destiny of the Montenegrin people "continue the ungodly, satanic path of the persecutors of Christ, the path of Pilate, the path of the Jews of that time who crucified Christ."[282]

Antisemitic narratives in Montenegro aren't common in the media and there is no systematic targeting of specific groups today. In the statements of Montenegrin officials, antisemitism is not referred to as a problem threatening Jews exclusively, but rather a threat to all of society that undermines democratic values and demands a coordinated global response.[283] Given the strengthening of national extremism, the focus of explicit discussions in the media, online spaces, and social networks was on domestic issues.

In the **first time peak** — July 2019 — media reported that Croatian Roman Catholic communities and cultural centers in Germany relativized crimes that happened in the Jasenovac concentration camp. The focus was given to showings of Jakov Sedlar's controversial film "Jasenovac — the Truth" in at least ten German cities, along with other materials documenting supposedly pleasant camp life with photographs taken after World War II.[284]

Local online news portal Portal Analitika suggested in an article that the gravity of genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995

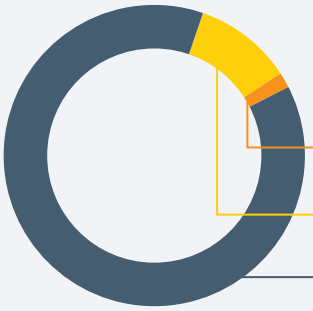
281 Portal Analitika. "Dukanovic: We are proud there has never been anti-Semitism in Montenegro," October 31, 2019. https://www.portalanalitika.me/clanak/349880--dukanovic-ponosni-smo-sto-u-crnoj-gori-nikad-nije-bilo-antisemitizma.

282 Amfilohije. "Dukanovic preaches the Satanic Church and wants to turn Montenegro into a demonic, satanic community," May 19, 2020. https://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/politika/435838/amfilohije-dukanovic-propovjeda-satansku-crkvu-i-hoce-crnu-goru-da-pretvori-u-demonsku-satansku-zajednicu.

283 Mondo. "Djukanovic: The fight against anti-Semitism is a permanent obligation," January 23, 2020. https://mondo.me/info/Crna-gora/a804299/Djukanovic-Polaganje-vijenca-Sjeccanje-na-holokaust-borba-protiv-antisemitizma.html.

284 E.S.T. "The Ustashas, with the help of the Catholic church, justify the crimes in the Jasenovac Camp," July 17, 2019. https://www.republika.rs/svet/region/145724/ustase-pomoc-katolicke-crkve-pravdaju-zlocine-logoru-jasenovac.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 1,842 relevant media pieces:

- **1.6%** contained antisemitic statements
- **10.4%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **88%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

RHETORIC | SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | PHYSICAL | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



DENIAL



SYMBOLS



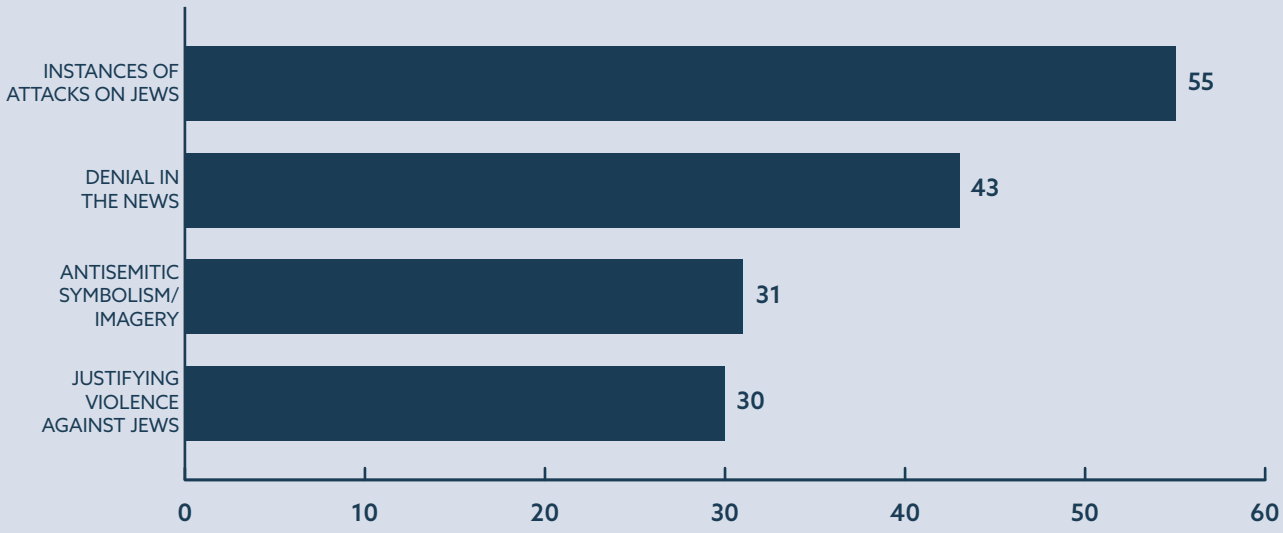
VIOLENCE

DENIAL: Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people during WWII.

SYMBOLS: Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism; can involve literal symbols and also instances of character tropes and comparisons.

VIOLENCE: Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

Most frequent mentions:



was comparable to the Holocaust. This comparison was used to put blame on the Serbian government for not recognizing the Srebrenica genocide. The article described denial of Srebrenica as an issue as problematic as Holocaust denial, and accused the Serbian government of revisionism. This article was a good example of using the Holocaust as a tool to communicate local political issues.

In the **second time peak** — October 2019 — there were several articles reporting on a statement by President Đukanović at a conference of the Jewish community, "Mahar 2019," in which he highlighted that there has never been antisemitism in Montenegro. Media also reported that the German government had adopted measures against far-right extremism and antisemitism. Attention was also given to Israel's detention of two Jordanians.[285]

Most of the articles from the **third time peak** — November 2019 — referred to the importance of anti-fascism for the further development of Montenegrin society and in the spirit of the International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism. The media also reported on the celebrations of the 101st anniversary of Poland's independence, and focused on an extreme-right march for "Greater Catholic Poland" emphasizing that "today's [Polish] elites are pursuing cultural Marxism, conquering schools, polluting the minds of our children. Not even to shout when Jews want to plunder our homeland."[286] Several articles reported that German police launched an investigation against three 14-year-olds for inciting hatred, as the teenagers allegedly played antisemitic songs after visiting the Buchenwald concentration camp.[287]

The articles from the **fourth peak** — December 2019 — mostly referred to the first visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to the Auschwitz Memorial Museum, and her message that she feels "deep shame for the barbaric crimes committed by the Germans here [in Auschwitz]."[288] Several articles were dedicated to a statement from Donald Trump that Israel did not have a greater friend in the White House than him. A group of articles focused on the Israeli bombing of what they called "extremist targets" in Gaza, in response to three rockets being fired from Palestinian territory in the direction of southern Israel. The media also reported that Amazon stopped selling Christmas decorations with pictures of Auschwitz.[289]

In the **fifth peak** — early January 2020 — the media reported on a statement by former President of Poland Lech Walesa, who criticized the current president, Andrzej Duda, for not inviting Russian President Vladimir Putin to the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The media also focused on statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who warned that Israel would respond fiercely to any attack, and expressed support for the United States after the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani.

285 RTGC. "Jordan invited the ambassador from Israel for consultations," October 30, 2019. http://www.rtcg.me/vijesti/svijet/257400/jordan-pozvao-ambasadora-iz-izraela-na-konsultacije-.html.
286 Agencija BETA. "The far right celebrated Greater Catholic Poland, EU flag burned," November 11, 2019. https://www.vijesti.me/svijet/evropa/408758/ekstremna-desnica-slavila-veliku-katolicku-poljsku-spalili-zastavu-eu.
287 Vijesti online. "Teenagers in Germany under investigation for Nazi songs," November 6, 2019. https://www.vijesti.me/svijet/evropa/407957/tinejdzeri-u-njemackoj-pod-istragom-zbog-nacistickih-pjesama.
288 Pobjede, Redakcija. "Merkel in Auschwitz: I am ashamed of German crimes," December 6, 2019. https://www.pobjeda.me/clanak/merkel-u-ausvicu-stidim-se-njemackih-zlocina.
289 RCTG. "Amazon removed Christmas decorations with pictures of Auschwitz," December 2, 2019. http://www.rtcg.me/magazin/tehnologija/261018/amazon-uklonio-bozicne-ukrase-sa-slikama-ausvica.html.

Peaks in Media Monitoring

1 JULY 2019

Media reported that Croatian Roman Catholic communities and cultural centers in Germany relativized crimes that happened in the Jasenovac concentration camp.

Local online news portal suggested that the gravity of the genocide in Srebrenica was comparable to the Holocaust.

2 OCTOBER 2019

President Đukanović stated that there has never been antisemitism in Montenegro at a Jewish conference.

Media reported on the German government's measures against far-right extremism and antisemitism.

Israel detained two Jordanians.

3 NOVEMBER 2019

Articles referred to the importance of anti-fascism for the development of Montenegrin society.

Media focused on an extreme-right march for "Greater Catholic Poland."

Reported on German police launching an investigation against teenagers for inciting hatred.

4 DECEMBER 2019

Referred to the first visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to the Auschwitz Memorial Museum.

Trump stated Israel did not have a greater friend in the White House than him.

Israel bombardment of Gaza.

Amazon stopped selling Christmas decorations with pictures of Auschwitz.

5 EARLY JANUARY 2020

Former President of Poland criticized current Poland president for not inviting Vladimir Putin to the 75th anniversary of the Auschwitz liberation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Israel would respond fiercly to any attack and expressed support for the US.

6 LATE JANUARY 2020

Several world leaders met at an antisemitism event in Jerusalem.

Reported that ISIS appealed to its fighters to attack Jews and Jewish settlements ahead of Trump's peace plan.



"Đukanović: 'We are proud that there has never been antisemitism in Montenegro'"

The **sixth peak** — late January 2020 — the media reported that several world leaders met at an antisemitism event in Jerusalem. It also reported that the Islamist extremist group ISIS allegedly appealed to its fighters, and Muslims in general, to attack Jews and Jewish settlements ahead of the presentation of Trump's peace plan.

Sources and Countries Mentioned

Montenegrin media mostly reported on the role of the United States in resolving relations between Israel and Palestine. Israel and the United States were presented as allies, and President Trump's statements, that Israel's best friend was in the White House, were also reported. Trump's peace plan received media attention, as well. Media also reported on Israel's bombing of Hamas positions in Gaza, in response to the rockets launched into southern Israeli territory. Croatia was mentioned in the context of disrespect for Serb and Jewish victims during World War II.[290]

Antisemitic narratives were mostly covered in news reports. Outlets that produced the largest number of articles discussing events/incidents related to Israel, Jewish people or antisemitism were: *portalanalitika*, *rtcg.me*, *antenam-net*, *vijesti.me*, and *aktuelno.me*. Of these, *vijesti.me* and *rtcg.me* were considered mainstream, reliable sources of information. *Portalanalitika* and *Antena M* were also considered reliable but their readership was much smaller. *Portal aktuelno.me* could be classified as a popular tabloid. Antisemitic statements were present in the content of *vijesti.me*, *aktuelno.me*, and Serbian-based tabloid *republika.rs* news portal.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

Antisemitism in Montenegrin media is rare, and the position of the Jewish community is favorable. Online media is flooded with hate speech, but this refers to domestic problems and regional nationalist conflicts. Antisemitic narratives that were observed are unrelated to nationalism in Montenegrin discourse. Narratives concerning genocide compare the genocide in Srebrenica with the Holocaust, and in that sense the suffering of the Jewish community has never been mentioned in a negative context. Political extremist movements do not employ antisemitic narratives, though they may use inflammatory language generally. Narratives that have elements of extremism mostly focus on polarization between Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians and Bosniaks.

Conclusion

The analysis of the legal framework, media narratives and interviews confirm that antisemitism is not a widespread phenomenon in Montenegrin society.

290 Republika. "A beach is burning where Croats are orgying over the graves of Serb victims," July 16, 2019. https://www.republika.rs/svet/region/145593/video-gori-plaza-kojoj-hrvati-orgijaju-nad-grobovima-srpskih-zrtava.

Media and social networks are not host to antisemitic discussions, nor is it common to encounter a significant volume of hateful messages or historical revisionism. More recently, the problem of spreading national extremism and hate speech is something that oppresses Montenegrin society. Although antisemitism itself is not a problem in Montenegro, crimes motivated by the spread of nationalist and religious hatred are dividing society. Going forward, it is necessary to improve the implementation of existing legislation in order to strengthen legal certainty and protection of victims of antisemitic crimes. This opinion is shared by the local Jewish community.

It is also necessary to improve court statistics in order to more accurately monitor the scope and type of hate crimes. In addition, it is necessary to actively work on the suppression of hate speech in the Montenegrin media. In an era of growing nationalism, it is extremely important to understand and recognize hate crimes and hate speech in order to act preventively and decisively in their suppression.

North Macedonia

Jews have lived in the area of what is today North Macedonia since the time of ancient Rome, and it is home to some of the oldest synagogues in the region. Macedonian Jews suffered the loss of approximately 98 percent of their population during the Holocaust, making it the hardest hit Jewish community in Europe.[293] After World War II, a handful of surviving Jews returned to what is now North Macedonia, while the majority migrated to Israel. Today, Jews enjoy full rights recognized by the constitution as one of the five religious communities in the country. North Macedonia has been praised by the international community for a restitution law providing for the return of Jewish property that was lost in the Holocaust. North Macedonia is not yet an International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) member, currently holding the status of a liaison country.

This study covers antisemitic narratives in the online media space. It covers the mainstream and tabloid media as well as social media. The research revealed a very small presence of antisemitic narratives, limited to comments on Facebook, one political incident and a few articles in the media.

293 Prior to WWII around 7,800 Jews lived in Macedonia, of whom 7,144 were sent to the Treblinka death camp. Only 200 Macedonian Jews survived the war. Yad Vashem The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, "March 1943, Jews being deported from Macedonia to the Treblinka Death Camp" https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/this-month/march/1943-2.html; https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/microsoft%20word%20-%206633.pdf.



Hate speech and hate crimes are criminal acts punishable by law, despite the criminal code not making specific references to antisemitism. Religious communities are protected by the constitution and other legislation such as the Law on Anti-Discrimination. North Macedonia is part of OSCE and ODIHR hate crime reporting, the main international body in the country monitoring hate crimes, including antisemitism. In 2018, the largest number of hate crime incidents were related to ethnicity and political affiliation.

Media monitoring in this project showed that antisemitism was infrequent in North Macedonian media. Media predominantly focused on domestic affairs, with regular reports concerning Israel and news in the Middle East. Monitoring was divided into two parts. The first covered prevailing types of antisemitism discussed in online media



and the second covered the occurrence of antisemitic statements in monitored media. In the first part, news regarding Israel and developments in the Middle East attracted the highest media interest.

A feature of the second part of monitoring were articles that used antisemitic language, antisemitic Facebook comments and an incident involving the first Jewish minister of the North Macedonian government, who was asked by a political rival to wear the Star of David instead of her own party badge.[294] The two articles were widely published in the Macedonian media, and contained sentiments that were nationalistic and religious, using defamatory and stereotypical language against Jews. Comments on Facebook, while not revealing any sustainable or coherent antisemitic narratives, did employ conspiratorial stereotypes justifying the killing of Jews, making false statements and using symbols as libel against Jews. The highest number of antisemitic comments were on the Facebook pages of various media outlets related to Israel's foreign relations.

The dominant dividing lines in North Macedonia today are interethnic tensions between Albanians and Macedonians, and political divisions between the two main parties, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). These divisions are exacerbated by antisemitic narratives, making North Macedonia susceptible to authoritarian tendencies and foreign influence.

An earnest dialogue between the ethnic, political and religious communities is needed in order to overcome the divisions hurting Macedonia's prospects of becoming a prosperous and consolidated democracy. The government should also attempt to engage and educate young people on human rights and raise the general

294 Hepner, Hannah. "Macedonian Minister receives anti-Semitic insults by ruling party activist," January 23, 2020. https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism/Macedonian-minister-receives-antisemitic-insults-by-ruling-party-activist-614984.

public's awareness on issues including the Holocaust, Jewish history and Israel.

Historical Overview

Although Jews had lived in the area of Macedonia from antiquity, the Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century, became the predominant group in the town of Monastir by the 16th century, with other two large communities in Skopje and Štip.[295] The Sephardi communities maintained strict religious observance and allegiance to Jewish communal institutions, highly traditional and distinctive lifestyles, and spoke the Ladino language. At the turn of the twentieth century, Monastir's Jewish population reached nearly eleven thousand, with many Jews in the area of today's North Macedonia prospering in the fields of trade, banking, medicine, and law. However, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, all three communities were in sharp decline, marked by poverty and with many emigrating to the Americas and Palestine.

After Nazi Germany and its allies invaded Yugoslavia in early April 1941, Bulgaria annexed Yugoslav Macedonia. Several months later, Bulgaria introduced strict antisemitic laws and subsequently ghettoization and strict repression. While the Bulgarian government refused to deport Jews residing in Bulgaria proper, it deported Jews without Bulgarian citizenship from the territories of Yugoslavia (and Greece), including Jews from Bitola, Skopje, and Štip, to Treblinka concentration camp in March 1943.[296] The Jewish communities in Yugoslav (along with Greek) Macedonia were obliterated, with over 90% losing their life in the Holocaust. Only a few hundred returned out of more than seven thousand deported. Other Jews survived by joining the Partisans, fleeing to Albania, or being protected by Italy, Spain, and other countries.

At present, there are around two hundred Jews living in North Macedonia, mostly in its capital Skopje. North Macedonia's Jewish community benefited from a 2002 law providing for the return of heirless Jewish property to the Jewish community and was able to re-establish a community center and synagogue. North Macedonia recently adopted its new name after Greece refused for decades its integration into the international community due to the use of the name Macedonia, which also encompasses huge swaths of Northern Greece and Western Bulgaria. Its accession process to the European Union is currently blocked by Bulgaria, which denies North Macedonia its right to separate language and ethnicity. Internally, North Macedonia has maintained a very fragile relationship between its Slavic majority and significant Albanian minority.

The Jewish Minority in North Macedonia Today

After North Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, the situation of the Jewish community largely improved. Today it enjoys full rights, recognized by the constitution as one of the five religious communities of the country. Inaugurated in 2011, the Holocaust Memorial Center was built with the help of the government and international Jewish organizations. Every March 11, the Jews who died in Treblinka are commemorated by representatives of the government, Jewish organizations and other religious groups. There is a community center in Skopje where members of the

295 Sadikario, Samuel. "The Jews on the Balkans short review," November 2, 2010. http://esefarad.com/?p=16786.
296 Ibid.

Jewish community gather, which includes the Beth Yaakov synagogue.[297] The government established a Holocaust Fund to preserve Jewish tradition, culture and the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust. North Macedonia passed a restitution law providing for the return of Jewish heirless property that was lost in the Holocaust to the Jewish community.[298] There are few reported antisemitic incidents in North Macedonia, with three reported cases in 2017 and none in 2019.

In 2018, swastikas were drawn on the monument of Krale Marko in Prilep, but it is unclear whether this incident was a hate crime with antisemitic subtext, as there are no Jews living in this area and no information about the existence of extremist groups operating there. However, this conclusion was challenged by Rashela Mizrahi, the first Jewish minister in a Macedonian government, who stated in an interview that, although it is not widespread, there is antisemitism in North Macedonia.[299] Mizrahi was herself subjected to insults and threats to her and her family when she was appointed minister of labor and social policy in a Macedonian technical government. According to Mizrahi, Jews generally cohabitate peacefully with other ethnicities in North Macedonia, but "things change when we assume public office," which was when she received messages and emails full of slander, insults and threats.[300]

Although the Jewish community in North Macedonia is a small one, it is a very active community that maintains ties with Jewish organizations in the region (mainly Serbia) and others all around the world.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

The Republic of North Macedonia is not yet an IHRA member country. It currently holds the status of a liaison country and is expected to become full member in 2021. The country also became party to the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets in 2009 and Guidelines and Best Practices in 2010.[301] Religious communities in North Macedonia are protected by the constitution. They apply for registration before the Skopje Basic Court II, and approved applications are sent to the Committee on Relations between Religious Communities and Groups, a governmental body.[302]

The criminal code does not make specific references to antisemitism. However, amendments introduced in 2018 target hate crimes in a wide range of circumstances, stating in Article 39 (5) that a crime could be committed "against a person or a group of persons or property, directly or indirectly" based on their "race, skin color, ethnic background, language, nationality, religious belief or other types of beliefs." In Article

297 World Jewish Congress, "North Macedonia, Community Life." https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/MK.
298 "North Macedonia Virtual Jewish History Tour," Jewish Virtual Library. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/macedonia-virtual-jewish-history-tour#3.
299 Author interview with Rashela Mizrahi, politician and member of Jewish community in North Macedonia.
300 Ibid.
301 "North Macedonia Virtual Jewish History Tour," *Jewish Virtual Library*, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/macedonia-virtual-jewish-history-tour#3. Terezin Declaration is a set of measures seeking to right economic wrongs that accompanied the Holocaust and victims of Nazi persecution in Europe. Read Terezin Declaration in full here: https://www.state.gov/prague-holocaust-era-assets-conference-terezin-declaration/.
302 The Muslim Sufi Bektashi Community and Orthodox Archbishop of Ohrid (OAO), two smaller communities, face discrimination because the state refuses to register them. As such, the Bektashi community cannot claim ownership of a shrine in Tetovo, their headquarters which has now been claimed by the Islamic Community of Macedonia. In 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favor of OAO ordering the Macedonian government to pay it a fine. However, OAO and the Bektashi Community still remain unregistered.

122 (42), the amendments also include a definition of hate crime. The Office of the Ombudsman offers help with human rights and religious matters, as in 2008, when it gave its recommendations on the subject of teaching religion in schools. Religious beliefs are also protected by the Law on Anti-Discrimination.

In 2000, the country passed the Denationalization Law and stipulated that compensation for property lacking an heir would be paid to the Holocaust Fund for the Jews of Macedonia, managed jointly by the Macedonian government and the Jewish community.[303] The main purposes of the fund are to manage formerly Jewish heirless property, including building and maintaining the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia in Skopje, revitalizing Jewish monuments, and conducting research and education-related activities. The 2007 Compensation Agreement between the government, Holocaust Fund and Jewish community allowed for the payment of 21.1 million Euros ($24.2 million) between June 2009 and June 2018.[304]

The Ministry of Internal Affairs keeps monthly records of hate crime statistics, which are reported to the OSCE-ODIHR. Country-wide statistics are currently collected by OSCE-ODIHR, which receives data from the government and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of North Macedonia (MHC). There are no published data for 2019 yet; the latest are from 2018. According to the MHC 2018 report on hate crimes in North Macedonia, the largest number of incidents were related to ethnicity (64 percent), a doubling of ethnic hate crimes compared to 2017. This was followed by incidents related to political affiliation (25 percent), while religious belief and conviction represented only 3.2 percent. According to the U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Report 2017, Macedonia reported three antisemitic incidents that year.[305] According to the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices from 2019, the Jewish community reported no new cases that year.

Victims of antisemitic crimes have a right to benefit from measures established by the Law on Witness Protection, which was amended to conform with the European Commission's standards to ensure that witnesses are included in the protection program upon the Special Public Prosecutor's Office request, due to the high sensitivity of the cases involved.[306]

Despite much that has been done to improve the legal protection of the Jewish minority, there are still gaps that need to be filled. The Law on Compensation for Victims of Crime has yet to be adopted. On the issue of restitution, North Macedonia limits eligible claimants only to citizens of the country.[307]

303 JPR "OVERVIEW OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY RESTITUTION/COMPENSATION REGIMES – MACEDONIA," 2016, p.3 https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3278.
304 U.S. Department of State, "North Macedonia 2019 Human Rights Report," p. 8-9. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NORTH-MACEDONIA-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf.
305 U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Report, 2017. https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/.
306 Commission of the European Communities. "Commission Working Document: on the feasibility of E.U. legislation in the area of protection of witnesses and collaborators with justice," November 13, 2007. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0693:FIN:EN:PDF.
307 European Shoah Legacy Institute "THE HOLOCAUST (SHOAH) IMMOVABLE PROPERTY RESTITUTION STUDY," January 2017. p. 9. http://shoahlegacy.org/storage/app/media/2.1/2.1.4.1%20Immovable%20Property%20Study%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf.

Legal Gaps in Legislation



The Law on Compensation for Victims of Crime has yet to be adopted and restitution is limited to citizens



The state's response to cases of hate crimes are considered insufficient or entirely absent



Limited judicial independence, politicization of the judicial oversight body, and inadequate funding



Few attempts are made to educate young people on human rights or raise the general public's awareness of the issue

Institutional Mechanisms

According to MHC, the state's response to cases of hate crimes from 2018 was unsatisfactory; responses were insufficient or entirely absent. A number of hate crime offenders had been identified as suspects by the police and others were under investigation, but few criminal charges were pressed. The above-mentioned 2019 State Department report noted that "limited judicial independence, politicization of the judicial oversight body, and inadequate funding of the judiciary continued to hamper court operations and effectiveness." The 2019 European Commission report, on the other hand, noted that nearly all Macedonian courts maintained a clearance rate of 100 percent or higher, demonstrating continued efficiency and no backlog of cases.

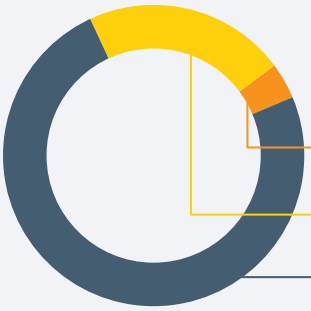
OSCE-ODIHR and MHC have sponsored two online platforms through which data on hate speech and hate crimes are collected and can be directly reported by citizens. MHC also collects data by monitoring the media and contacting the police and the victims directly. The Ministry of Justice, authorized associations and legal clinics offer free legal aid as a primary and secondary aid. MHC also offers free legal aid and assistance to members of religious and marginalized communities. While recognizing that much remains to be done, the European Commission also praised the country for having made progress regarding political atmosphere, interethnic relations and the government's relations with media and civil society. However, the MHC states that few attempts were made to educate young people on human rights issues or raise the awareness of the general public.

Media Monitoring Outcomes

Media monitoring included sources written in the three most common languages in the country: Macedonian, Serbian and Albanian. From these sources, the research identified 1,361 relevant mentions, out of which there were 18 mentions containing antisemitic statements and 48 discussed instances of antisemitism. The remaining relevant media pieces contributed to a general discussion and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

The prevailing type of antisemitism present in online media was rhetorical

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 1,361 relevant media pieces:

- **1.3%** contained antisemitic statements
- **3.5%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **95.2%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | RHETORIC | PHYSICAL | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



ISRAEL



FALSE



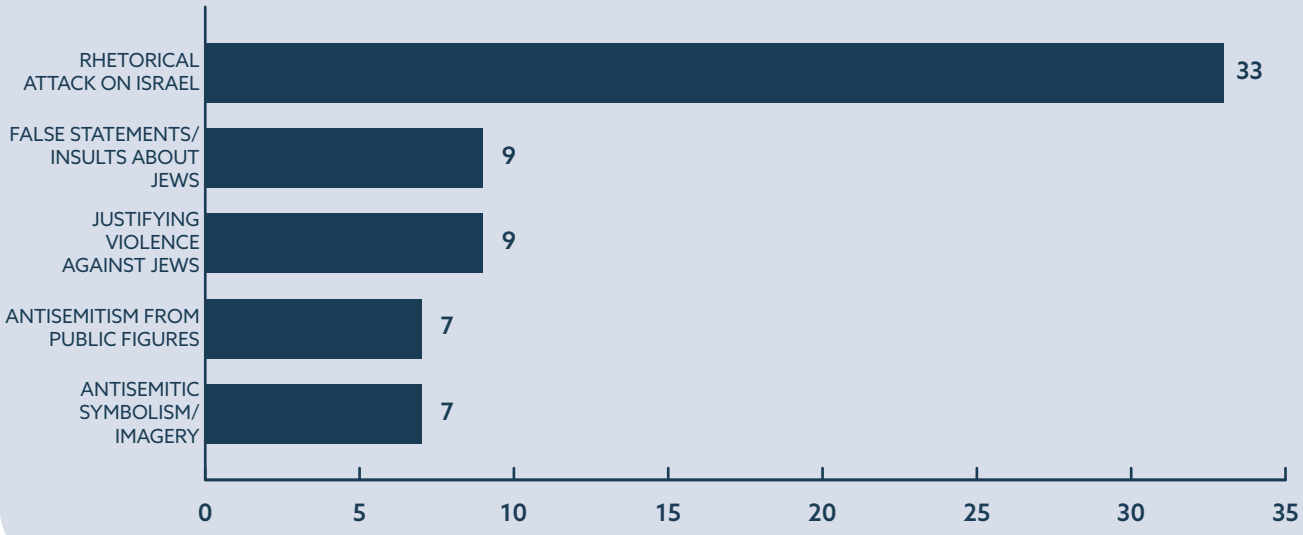
VIOLENCE

ISRAEL: Instances where an attack on Israel, Israelis, or Israeli history is also antisemitic.

FALSE: Making an untrue statement or spreading disinformation about Jews or Jewish institutions.

VIOLENCE: Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

Most frequent mentions:



antisemitism. Antisemitic statements most often contained **symbols** (seven times) and **conspiracy** (four times). Discussed instances of antisemitism were also **rhetorical**. The most commonly used tags were **false** and **violence**, both of which were used nine times. Most of the tagged mentions were related to Israel (**AS-Israel** was used 33 times). The cases where these tags were applied were, among others, related to the Israeli bombing of specific targets in Syria.[308] Seven news articles covered the spread of antisemitism by **public figures**, as in the case of two verbal attacks against the first Jewish minister in a Macedonian government by her political rivals.

Although Macedonian online media widely covered developments in Israel and the Middle East, its general tendency was to focus on domestic issues rather than international issues. There were also instances of antisemitism occurring abroad that elicited coverage. Online media sources reported on **rhetorical** and **property** attacks against an old Jewish-Italian woman who survived the Holocaust by far-right groups in Italy.[309] Media also reported on frictions between Poland and Israel surrounding the episode when Polish President Andrzej Duda was not invited to give a speech at the commemoration of 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, held in Jerusalem.[310]

Antisemitism Narratives

The media monitoring found that the most prominent antisemitic narratives were found in the comments sections of various media outlets' Facebook pages. The language often used by commenters followed classic tropes, connecting Israel and the Jews with world-controlling powers, and commonly assuming that Zionists and the Mossad, supported by the United States, stand behind the conflicts in the Middle East. Commentators usually vented anger about innocent lives being lost and blamed Israel, as well as the online media on whose Facebook pages they were commenting, for not reporting fairly when Israel "attacks first," without backing up their statements. There were also occasional comments exclusively related to developments in the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to the effect of Israel igniting conflicts in order to annex more Palestinian territories. The United States is often mentioned as the key ally of Israel. Anti-Israel comments often lead to antisemitic comments, and there appeared to be no difference between the two, in the views of commenters using such language.

Two issues that have divided Macedonian society sharply in the last decade or so are interethnic relations and the dispute with Greece over the country's official name. The latter issue has always been closely linked to other sensitive issues like Macedonian identity, language, history and culture. These issues prove to be contentious, whether at home or abroad, including developments in the Middle East and around Israel. Because the E.U. and the United States are perceived (especially by VMRO-DPMNE supporters) to be behind these alleged attacks on the Macedonian identity, due to their ongoing support of negotiations that culminated in the Prespa Agreement — and because they, especially the United States, are seen as staunch supporters of

308 Infomax.mk: "Israel bombs Damascus," May 17, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/298619206927603/posts/2079316448857861.
309 Vecer: "The Italian who survived Auschwitz receives 200 threats a day and is guarded by the police," November 8, 2019. https://vecer.mk/node/459289.
310 Sloboden Pecat "Polish President Duda boycotts rally in Jerusalem against antisemitism," January 23, 2020. https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/polskiot-pretsedatel-duda-go-bojkotira-sobirot-vo-erusalim-protiv-antisemitizmot/.

Peaks in Media Monitoring



1 MARCH 2019

President Trump recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel.

Media reported on the exchange of fire between Israel and Hamas and the subsequent truce.

Commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the deportation of Macedonian Jews.

Permanent exhibition of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Skopje opened.

2 MAY 2019

North Macedonia represented in the Eurovision song contest held in Israel in 2018.

Israeli bombardment of Syria led to antisemitic and anti-Israel comments on social media.

3 NOVEMBER 2019

President Stevo Pendarovski's speech commemorated Kristallnacht at the Albanian Institute of Cultural and Spiritual Heritage.

Rockets were fired at Israel.

Football matches held between North Macedonia's team, Israel, and Austria.

4 EARLY JANUARY 2020

An official of ruling party SDSM, Mersiha Smailović, made a defamatory comment in regard to the first and only Jewish-Macedonian member of the government.

5 MID-JANUARY 2020

President Pendarovski attended the 75th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The media reported on Mersiha Smailović publishing a video of her husband aboard a Turkish boat that was trying to bring aid to Palestinians.

6 MARCH 2020

Reporting on elections in Israel and the opening of Vatican secret archives.

Israel and the Jews — it is, therefore, alleged that the same powers that cause trouble and control the world are also against the Macedonian people. In this way, world events such as the conflicts in the Middle East are connected with local polarized issues.[311]

Those spreading antisemitic narratives online showed no obvious strategy to targeting specific audiences. However, the nationalistic articles inflaming ethnic and political divisions within Macedonia had very clear objectives in mind, which were to steer Macedonia away from its E.U. and NATO paths, and to align it with other authoritarian regimes in the region, such as Hungary or Serbia, but also in a wider context with Russia and other Eastern Orthodox nations.

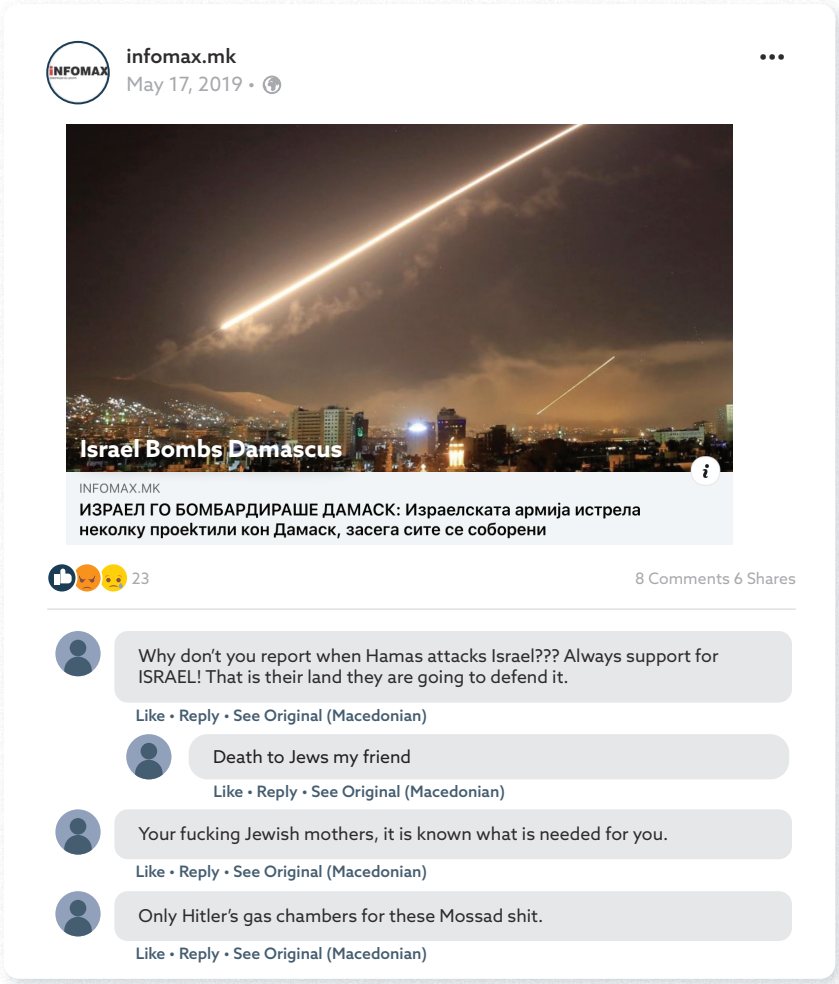
The **first time peak** was dominated by U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize the Golan Heights as part of Israel, and reactions to this decision by countries in the region, as well as Russia and the E.U. The media also heavily reported on the exchange of fire between Israel and Hamas, and the truce reached between the two parties. On March 11, 2019, North Macedonia commemorated the 76th anniversary of the deportation of 7,144 Macedonian Jews who were forcibly gathered and sent to the Treblinka death camp. Many news sources covered the opening of the permanent exhibition of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Skopje and commemorations that were also held in Bitola and Stip.

There was an antisemitic article published in *Nova Makedonija* in which the author wrote of a "Jewish collective betrayal of the Savior" and of the "complex of narcissism" of the "chosen people." This was juxtaposed with the magnanimity of the ancient Macedonians, the purported ancestors of contemporary Macedonians, who didn't keep the right to salvation to themselves.[312] The author sought to appeal to the part of the public that is against Macedonia's change of name, who are also usually nationalistic, religious, and xenophobic. His article promoted a shared sense of victimhood between the Jews and the Macedonians suffering at the hands of Western powers, while simultaneously considering the Macedonians to be more "cosmopolitan" and a higher civilization than the Jews. This article represented an isolated case in this time peak, but a similar article was published in two other media outlets (*Puls24* and *Kurir.mk*) in time peak four, appearing on the third day of Orthodox Christmas, and using historically constructed stereotypes and libel against the Jewish people.

The **second time peak** was overwhelmingly characterized by reports on North Macedonia's representation in the Eurovision song contest held in 2019 in Israel. It also elicited antisemitic and anti-Israel comments by readers of the Facebook pages of certain media outlets, which were related to Israel's bombing of military targets in Damascus, Syria, on May 17, 2019. They called for death to Jews, using swearwords and commenting "it is known what works on them," hinting at the employment of

311 See below the Nova Makedonija article in the first time peak and the Minister Mizrahi case in the fourth peak for a clear illustration of how the SDSM vs. VMRO-DPMNE as well as interethnic and religious polarizations are connected to historical and wider world events.

312 Клетников, Ефтим (Kletnikov, Eftim). "Европската судбина на Евреите и на Македонците (Физички и идентитетски холокауст)" (The European destiny of the Jews and the Macedonians (Physical and identity holocaust), March 13, 2019. https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/mislenja/kolumni/%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%84%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%81-2/.



Recreated Facebook post of antisemitic comments on an article reporting on Israel's bombing of Damascus.

Nazi methods, accompanied by the hashtag #FreePalestine, or commenting that only Hitler's gas chambers are appropriate for these "Mossad sh**."[313]

The most significant aspect of the **third time peak** was President Stevo Pendarovski's speech commemorating Kristallnacht at the Albanian Institute of Cultural and Spiritual Heritage. Almost every media outlet that reported on it featured the title: "Pendarovski: Holocaust Did Not Happen Unexpectedly and Overnight."[314] Most news sources also focused on rockets fired at Israel on November 12, 2019, in response to the killing of the leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group. A large part of the news was related to the football matches of North Macedonia's national team against Israel and Austria. This peak revealed a degree of animosity toward Israel and Jews accompanied by conspiracy theories regarding Jewish supposed power to control the world, justifying Nazism and Hitler or calling for the killing of Jews, using swearwords and stereotypes meant to denigrate Jews as a people. These comments were made on the Facebook page of *Faktor.mk* and were related to dozens of rockets being fired at Israel on November 12, 2019, in response to Israel's killing of Bahaa Abu al-Ata, the head of the Al-Quds Brigades in Gaza, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ).[315]

The **fourth time peak** was distinguished by a rare comment on North Macedonian politics. Mersiha Smailović, an official of the ruling party SDSM, made a defamatory comment with regard to the first and only Jewish-Macedonian member of the North Macedonian government, the VMRO-DPMNE technical Minister of Labor and Social Policy Rashela Mizrahi. Smailović was reacting on Facebook against Minister Mizrahi's "wearing her party badge" while representing the Macedonian government. In a reply to a comment that the Albanian ministers keep the Albanian flag in their governmental offices, Smailović said that

313 Infomax. "ИЗРАЕЛ ГО БОМБАРДИРАШЕ ДАМАСК" (Israel bombs Damascus), May 17, 2019. https://infomax.mk/wp/%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%BB-%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%B1om%D0%B1ap%D0%B4%D0%B8pa%D1%88e-%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BA-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-ap/?fbclid=IwAR1GN7upShyvCzjKH6xw4kcctfDgi2RUjAwzxK1b9ZTFrTEKmd8aeiivLGo.

314 Kanal 5: "Pendarovski on the occasion of the anniversary of "Crystal Night": The Holocaust did not happen unexpectedly overnight," November 9, 2019. https://kanal5.com.mk/articles/396645/pendarovski-po-povod-godishninata-od-kristalnata-nokj-holokaustot-ne-se-sluchi-neochekuvano-i-preku-nokj.

315 Faktor: "(ВИДЕО) ДЕСЕТИЦИ РАКЕТИ ИСПУКАНИ КОН ИЗРАЕЛ: Една експлодираше на автопат" [(VIDEO) TENS OF ROCKETS FIRED AT ISRAEL: One Explodes on a Highway), November 12, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/Faktor.mk/posts/1733346296801223?__tn__=-R

that's the Albanians' national symbol, while Mizrahi was wearing her party's, "if it had been the Star of David, it would've been OK," wrote Smailović.[316] Although refusing to apologize, Smailović claimed that her words were taken out of context, that she did not intend them as antisemitic, but in terms of party representation.[317] Smailović's comment was followed by another antisemitic comment from another SDSM official, Vidana Boskova Micevska, who also wrote on Facebook: "I do not mind that Rashela joined a fascist party. I am sure the Nazi government also had Jews who fought for a salary and better social rights for Jews." By "fascist party," Micevska was referring to VMRO-DPMNE.[318]

These comments caused a furor in Macedonian politics and society and were widely condemned, although much of that condemnation appeared to have been partisanship and opportunism, rather than truly recognizing the implications for Macedonian society and peaceful cohabitation. It quickly grew into a smear campaign between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, causing an outpouring of slander and insults on social networks along interethnic, political and religious lines.[319] The two media outlets that mostly fueled the flames of division were *Kurir.mk* and *Lider.mk*. This language was condemned by the media, the Jewish community in Macedonia, the Holocaust Fund of Macedonian Jews, SDSM leader Zoran Zaev, OSCE, and others. Mizrahi herself said that the attacks against her and her integrity would only encourage her to work even harder, adding that she would not allow the Macedonian people to be labeled as antisemitic.[320] In this regard, Mizrahi chose, in a rather diplomatic manner, to call this incident "unfortunate," although no one, not even Zoran Zaev, had apologized.[321]

This incident did not remain the only such one in Mizrahi's political career. She was again the victim of slander, libel, and insults when she was appointed a member of



Photo of VMRO-DPMNE Technical Minister of Labor and Social Policy Rashela Mizrahi.

316 Kurir: "Мерсиха од СДСМ со нацистичка порака: Рашела стави си давидова ѕвезда!" (SDSM's Mersiha with a Nazi message: Rashela put on the Star of David), January 5, 2020. https://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/mersiha-od-sdsm-so-nacistichka-poraka-rashela-stavi-si-davidova-dzvezda/

317 https://360stepeni.mk/humanitarkata-mersiha-smailovik-pod-napad-za-antisemitizam/.

318 Lider "Шарена револуционерка шири антисемитизам: Сигурно и кај нацистите во влада имало евреи кои се бореле за плата" (The revolutionary of colorful revolution spreads anti-Semitism: Surely there were Jews in the Nazi government who fought for wages), January 5, 2020. https://lider.com.mk/makedonija/sharena-revolucionerka-shiri-antisemitizam-sigurno-i-kaj-nacistite-vo-vlada-imalo-evrei-koi-se-borele-za-plata/; https://vecer.mk/node/469662; https://vecer.mk/node/469662; https://lider.com.mk/makedonija/sharena-revolucionerka-shiri-antisemitizam-sigurno-i-kaj-nacistite-vo-vlada-imalo-evrei-koi-se-borele-za-plata/.

319 Kurir, Facebook page: "Мерсиха од СДСМ со нацистичка порака: Рашела стави си давидова ѕвезда!" (SDSM's Mersiha with a Nazi message: Rashela put on the Star of David), January 5, 2020. https://www.facebook.com/kurir/posts/10157819951133493?comment_id=10157820039688493&reply_comment_id=10157823223108493; https://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/mersiha-od-sdsm-so-nacistichka-poraka-rashela-stavi-si-davidova-dzvezda/.

320 Пешевска, Јулијана (Peshevska, Yuliyana). "Мизрахи нема да дозволи антисемитизам" (Mizrahi will not allow antisemitism), January 9, 2020. https://arhiva.telma.com.mk/mizrahi-nema-da-dozvoli-antisemitizam/; https://telma.com.mk/mizrahi-nema-da-dozvoli-antisemitizam/

321 Interview with Rashela Mizrahi, politician and member of Jewish community in North Macedonia.



Пендаровски на Меѓународниот форум „Сеќавање на Холокаустот и борба против Антисемитизмот“

23 Jan 2020 - 18:20

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НОВО

Владата донесе одлука СЦ „Борис Трајковски“ да биде вакцинален центар
НОВО

Most Macedonian media reported on President Pendarovksi's attendance at the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in Jerusalem.

The titles read: "Pendarovksi at the International forum 'Holocaust Remembrance and the Fight against Anti-Semitism.'"

VMRO-DPMNE's Executive Committee.[322] Eighty-three members of Mizrahi's family died in the Treblinka death camp, and she herself bears the name of one of her deceased aunts.[323] To her, these incidents showed that there was antisemitism in North Macedonia and that it had to be countered resolutely through education by making public statements against it.[324]

The **fifth time peak** was marked mainly by the news of North Macedonian President Pendarovski's attendance at the 75th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz held in Jerusalem. Pendarovski stated that thousands of Macedonian Jews were killed in the Holocaust, which represented an irreparable loss for North Macedonia.[325]

This peak also witnessed efforts to use antisemitism as a weapon in Macedonian politics. The news agencies *Lider* and *kurir.mk* again picked up the issue of Mersiha Smailović publishing a video in which Smailović's husband was reportedly aboard the Turkish boat "Mavi Marmara" that was apparently trying to bring aid to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The "exclusive news" published first by Lider and then republished by kurir.mk, bore the title "EXPLICIT VIDEO: Mersiha's Husband from SDSM in a Terrorist Action!" and began with the reporter saying: "Islamic extremism is at the heart of the ruling party SDSM."[326] The news was meant to attack SDSM by using carefully constructed language to further stir ethnic and political tensions in North Macedonia, which then showed up in comments on the Facebook pages of *Lider* and *Kurir* attacking

322 Ibid.
323 Ibid.
324 Interview with Rashela Mizrahi, politician and member of Jewish community in North Macedonia.
325 MKD 'Пендаровски во Ерусалим на форум „Сеќавање на Холокаустот и борба против антисемитизмот"' (Pendarovski in Jerusalem at the forum "Holocaust Remembrance and the Fight against Anti-Semitism"), January 23, 2020.
326 Lider "ЕКСПЛИЦИТНО ВИДЕО: Сопругот на Мерсиха од СДСМ во терористичка акција!" (EXCLUSIVE VIDEO: Mersiha's husband from SDSM in a terrorist action!), January 20, 2020.

them and calling Israel's action a "terrorist attack," or from the opposing side, calling for death of "terrorist" DUI (Democratic Union for Integration, the SDSM's Albanian coalition partner led by former National Liberation Army leaders).

No antisemitic incidents were found in the **sixth time peak**. The peak was characterized by reporting on elections in Israel and on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's victory. Also, there were reports about the opening of secret Vatican archives relating to the World War II period and Pope Pius XII.

Countries Mentioned and Sources

Specific countries were named mainly in the general news and less in antisemitic statements. Israel was the most-mentioned country, followed by the United States (12 times) and the E.U. (only once). The United States was almost always mentioned in relation to Israel and related developments in the Middle East. Iran and the Arab countries were commonly mentioned when there was a crisis in the region, while other actors, such as the E.U. were mentioned much less, although they were involved in the same regional developments.

The highest number of relevant mentions discussing antisemitism were found in the news. Antisemitic statements were mostly seen on Facebook, especially in the comments on the Facebook pages of various media outlets.

Traditional media that generated the largest number of articles discussing events or incidents related to Israel, Jewish people or antisemitism were: *a1on-mk* (68), *slobodenpecat-mk* (65), *netpress.com-mk* (61), *vesti-mk* (54), *daily-mk* (51), *libertas-mk* (50), *time-mk* (50), and *vecer-mk* (50). These outlets represented a mix of mainstream and tabloid media. the media outlets that produced the biggest number of articles containing antisemitic content were *Infomax.mk*, *balkanweb-com*, *kurir.mk*, and *Puls24.mk*. These are mainly tabloids. Some, such as *Kurir.mk*, also staunchly support the VMRO-DPMNE-led government, fawning over various sorts of extremism in North Macedonia within which antisemitic language also occurs.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

The presence of antisemitism in North Macedonian media is minimal. While there were occasional antisemitic articles observed in this research, the vast majority of Macedonian media reporting on Israel and Jewish people in general is fair and objective.

The two most urgent vulnerabilities in North Macedonia, which could be easily exacerbated by antisemitic narratives, are interethnic relations between the Albanians and Macedonians, and political divisions between the two main parties, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE. These divisions show in the online media space, particularly in Facebook comments. Interethnic relations are the most susceptible to socio-political crises in North Macedonia. Antisemitic narratives and instances of antisemitism did not create these tensions, but help expose the existing ethnic tensions and nationalism in the country. Those tensions exist independently of antisemitism, but are easily excited by developments in and around Israel turning quickly into political, interethnic and religious infighting.

Antisemitic narratives and instances of antisemitism did not create interethnic tensions in North Macedonia, but they help expose the **existing ethnic tensions** and nationalism in the country.

Conclusion

There appears to be a consensus in North Macedonia — among all political parties, across the religious spectrum, the media and civil society, and even among the Jewish community itself — that antisemitism is not present in Macedonian society. Even when rare antisemitic incidents occur, society looks upon them as abnormalities, as exceptions to the rule. However, this consensus is challenged by Rashela Mizrahi, who has twice been subjected to antisemitism, as well as threats to her and her family early in her political career.

The dominant afflictions that ail North Macedonia today are its political and interethnic divisions — the former between SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE, and the latter between Macedonians and Albanians, which also takes the form of religious division between Christian Orthodox Macedonians and Muslim Albanians. Paradoxically, as much as they are divided, and despite the general favorable atmosphere toward Jews in the country, both Albanian and Macedonian social media discussants will launch attacks against Israel and Jews, especially if an incident occurs between Israel and Palestinians, or more generally in the wider Middle East. The media monitoring did not reveal any relevant Albanian-language sources of antisemitism. However, Albanians appeared to comment on Macedonian-language sources when making antisemitic comments, as could be seen on media Facebook pages.

This consensus, and the way Macedonian society reacts to developments in the Middle East reveal the fact that antisemitism in North Macedonia is mainly reactive, and is utilized as a political tool by whichever party finds it useful, rather than being championed as a cause by any one party or group. Although extremist parties or movements are present in North Macedonia, they are very small and generally favor good relations with Israel.[327] However, the case of Jewish Minister Mizrahi shows that antisemitic narratives exist and are utilized for political gain. Antisemitism is used to sow divisions within the country, which subsequently increases its vulnerability to manipulation. The media monitoring did not confirm that antisemitic statements in North Macedonian online media promote the objectives of specific foreign state or non-state actors. However, countries like Russia, Serbia and Hungary try to push their objectives in North Macedonia, utilizing the existing rifts to directly intervene in Macedonian politics, through spreading propaganda and fake news.[328]

Antisemitic language in North Macedonia is manifested mainly through comments on social media, in particular on Facebook. There are no substantial and coherent antisemitic narratives to be found online, only individual comments by individual users who do not coordinate meaningfully. They often contain well-known conspiratorial stereotypes attributing to Jews controlling world powers or justifying the killing of Jews (though not in the name of an ideology), making false statements or using symbols to create libel against Jews.

However, antisemitism is discussed not only in relation to interethnic and political narratives, but also in relation to historical narratives of a commonly shared history between Macedonians and Jews, especially the history of World War II, North

327 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung "The Radical Right in Macedonia," Authors: Zdravko Saveski and Artan Sadiku, pp. 1-2. December 2012. https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09568.pdf.
328 Fighting Fake News Narratives "HOW SWIFTLY IS RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA SPREADING IN NORTH MACEDONIA," June 11, 2020. https://f2n2.mk/en/how-swiftly-is-russian-propaganda-spreading-in-north-macedonia/.

Macedonia's occupation by Axis-allied Bulgaria, the deportation and killing of 7,144 Macedonian Jews in the Treblinka death camp, and the common history of partisan resistance. Macedonian politics seek to maintain good ties with the state of Israel and with its own Jewish community. The official political narrative recognizes the Holocaust and the loss North Macedonia's Jewish community suffered during the Nazi occupation. This is portrayed as a common Macedonian-Jewish loss. In this regard, North Macedonia tries to make amends to its Jewish community by adopting laws and policies, such as the restitution of the formerly Jewish-owned heirless property and sponsoring Holocaust-related education programs.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that the North Macedonian government initiate an official dialogue between the ethnic, political and religious communities of the country, in the form of an annual conference, and with specific working groups to tackle the problems in each of those communities and devise specific recommendations. Kosovo's annual Interfaith Dialogue Conference could provide a good model. This newly established conference could also ensure that every form of hate speech and antisemitism is resolutely condemned by all political and religious leaders, media and NGOs.

As a second step, the government must also make serious attempts to engage and educate young people on human rights and hate speech, as well as raise the general public's awareness on issues including the Holocaust, Jewish history and Israel. It is recommended that the government consider including these topics in the school curricula, so that children and youth are educated on tolerance and respect for other groups from an early age.

Serbia

Public manifestations of antisemitism in Serbia are relatively rare. There are some sporadic incidents, such as painted swastikas on a bus stop in Belgrade, Nazi rallies for Serbia's collaborationist World War II Prime Minister Milan Nedić and, from time to time, antisemitic messages in online media, mostly under-article comments.[328] In general, however, it seems that Serbian Jews feel safe and not threatened by the wider society. International and local reports note the same.

According to the last census in 2011, there are currently 787 Jews living in Serbia.[329] The Jewish community in Serbia was vibrant and rich in the pre-World War II period. By the end of the war, however, around 80 percent of Serbia's Jewish population had been killed. While domestic collaborators played a significant role in sending Jews to certain death, these inglorious parts of Serbian history are often omitted or denied. A rehabilitation process for Serbia's wartime Prime Minister Milan Nedić and many other collaborationists, such as Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović, sparked sharp divisions between pro-Nedić right-wing and nationalist elites on one side, and the Jewish community, historians, human-rights activists and much of the general public

328 Milan Nedić was a Yugoslav and Serbian army general and politician who collaborated with the Nazis and served as the Prime Minister of a puppet government.
329 The number is based on religious affiliation data. The people who consider themselves Jews by ethnicity but not religion (for instance they have Jewish roots but they are not practicing Judaism), are not counted in this number.



on the other.[330] Serbia has adopted a range of legislation combatting antisemitism, though more needs to be done to develop robust educational programs. This report finds there is still room for improvement when it comes to education about the Holocaust, as the infamous role of the domestic collaborationist apparatus is usually omitted or explained very briefly. In some cases, it is even denied by nationalists

330 The process ended with the court dismissing the request in July 2018. Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović was the first Yugoslav leader of a popular uprising against the German invasion in 1941 and was soon promoted to the rank of general and minister of war by the Yugoslav royal government in exile in London. He was also the leader of the nationalistic Chetnik movement, which by the end of 1942 started collaborating with Nazi Germany, and committed large-scale crimes and other atrocities. Mihailovic was prosecuted for high treason and collaboration by a Yugoslav court in 1946 and was sentenced to death. He was rehabilitated by a Belgrade court in May 2015.



and right-wing revisionist historians. More recently, Serbia adopted the Law on the Memorial Centre Staro Sajmište, paving the way to save and restore the ruined and abandoned buildings of a former Nazi camp. The Serbian state is still under pressure from Jewish organizations and activists who are trying to save another former concentration camp, Topovske Šupe in Belgrade, which might be demolished for the sake of a future shopping mall.

Media monitoring provided good insight into the attitudes of the general public toward Jews, the Holocaust and World War II. While news sources monitored for this report rarely showed instances of antisemitism, under-article comments and Facebook discussions did. The most widespread instances were conspiracy theories involving Jews, Zionists and the state of Israel. People participating in these discussions often blamed Jews for wars, poverty, coronavirus, and using financing to control states. Many such comments were offensive and showed readers' ignorance of history — especially those arguing that Jews initiated World War II on purpose in order to create a Jewish state afterward, or that Jews intentionally brought Hitler to power.

Of note is the perceived and much-hailed "love and friendship" between Serbs and Jews. Serbian politicians, such as President Aleksandar Vučić, embrace this narrative and pro-government media are quick to report on it. By focusing on good relations with Israel and Serbian Jews, Serbian politicians aim to show how good their foreign politics are and how well Serbia treats its minorities. For Serbian politicians, good relations with Israel means Serbia is an important player in the international realm. Many online comments and discussions followed these same lines. In the media monitoring, the following two narratives were most prevalent: one of "Serbs as Jews," where there was a clear inclination of the victimization of the Serbian side; and the other of "Serbs and Jews as brothers in suffering and eternal friends."

The "Serbs as Jews" narrative has been used at least since the 1990s to portray the Serbs as victims – of Croats or Kosovo Albanians. And as victims or "as Jews," they cannot be responsible for perpetrating atrocities themselves — in World War II or in the 1990s. This appropriation of Jewish history

and identity for political nationalist purposes is, on its own, also a form of antisemitism.

Historical Overview

Like elsewhere in the Ottoman-ruled Balkans, most Jews in Serbia are descendants of Sephardi Jews who fled Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century.[331] Serbia's capital Belgrade boasted a large Jewish community in the Ottoman period and smaller communities spread to other towns. Many Jews were involved in the Serbian uprising and struggled against the Ottoman Empire starting in 1804 and lasting until 1830 when Serbia gained autonomy.[332] At the same time, during the liberation process of Serbia, some Jews were expelled, killed, or forcibly baptized, being identified as Ottoman allies. Some discriminatory restrictions on Jewish merchants and the choice of residence continued for decades.[333] By 1877 however, the Jewish candidate was elected to the National Assembly. In 1879, the "Serbian-Jewish Singer Society" (now "Brothers Baruh" choir) was established in Belgrade to celebrate the Serbian-Jewish friendship and remains one of the oldest Jewish choirs in the world still in existence.[334] In 1889 finally, the Serbian parliament lifted the last anti-Jewish restrictions signaling the period of Jewish prosperity in Serbia.[335] Ashkenazi Jews from Austria-Hungary and further away began settling in Belgrade and elsewhere in Serbia. By 1912, the Jewish community of the Kingdom of Serbia stood at five thousand. Many Jews fought on the side of Serbia during the First World War, further cementing good Serbian-Jewish relations. Present-day Serbia also includes the territory of the so-called Vojvodina province, which was part of the Kingdom of Hungary and then Austria-Hungary until 1918. Since the 1782 Edict of Tolerance by the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, Ashkenazi Jews began to settle throughout the Empire, including Vojvodina. Mostly Hungarian-speaking Jewish communities of Vojvodina flourished, and by the end of the 19th century, the region had nearly 40 Jewish communities, including 8 Orthodox ones.

The unification of Serbia and other South Slav lands into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) in the aftermath of the First World War saw a relatively prosperous period for the country's Jewish communities. The seat of the Union of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia was based in Belgrade and enjoyed patronage from the Royal Family. The number of Jews in Serbia in the interwar period grew to reach a peak of thirty-three thousand just before World War II (of which almost 90% were living in Belgrade and Vojvodina).

After the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Serbia was occupied by the German Army, and race laws were promulgated in the same month. The Jewish property was looted or confiscated, and Jewish men were ordered to perform forced labor.[336] By summer, German occupying authorities proceeded to round up Jews of Banat in Vojvodina and Belgrade, setting up concentration camps. The most notorious camp was on the Belgrade fairgrounds

331 Sowards, Steven W. "Nation without a state: The Balkan Jews," *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History*, 30 June 2020. https://staff.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lect17.htm.
332 European Jewish Congress, Serbia. https://eurojewcong.org/communities/serbia/.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
335 "Serbia Virtual Jewish History Tour," *Jewish Virtual Library*, 2021. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/serbia-virtual-jewish-history-tour.
336 Byford, Jovan. *Staro Sajmiste: A site remembered, forgotten, contested*, Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, Beograd, 2011. https://www.academia.edu/1868928/Staro_sajmi%C5%A1te_Mesto_se%C4%87anja_zaborava_i_sporenja_Staro_Sajmi%C5%A1te_A_site_remembered_forgotten_contested_Belgrade_2011_.

(Sajmište). Between July and November 1941, Jewish men were shot as part of retaliatory executions carried out by German forces in response to the rising anti-Nazi, Partisan insurgency in Serbia, additionally fueled by the drive to punish both ethnic Serbs and Jews for the German defeat in the First World War. The establishment of concentration camps and extermination policies proceeded with the assistance of the Serbian puppet government led by Milan Nedić. The second act of genocide began in December 1941, as Jewish women and children were incarcerated at the Sajmište concentration camp and subsequently gassed by mobile gas vans. By late spring 1942, SS commanders could report to Berlin that Serbia was the only country in which the Jewish question and the Gypsy question had been solved.[337] In the 1942 raid in Novi Sad, Hungarian troops killed many Jewish, and non-Jewish Serb civilians in Hungarian occupied Bačka part of Vojvodina. The rest were deported in 1944, along with Hungarian Jews.[338] Eventually, about two-thirds of Serbian Jews perished in the Holocaust. Others survived joining the Partisans, escaping to Italian-controlled territories, or hiding in Serbian villages.

After the war, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia was formed in Belgrade to coordinate the work of Jewish communities.[339] Its greatest task was to manage the Aliyah. A great part of the remaining Jewish Serbian population emigrated, chiefly into Israel. The Federation nevertheless managed to maintain active Jewish community life and a sense of common belonging of all Yugoslav Jews.[340] As Yugoslavia entered the crisis in the 1980s, first over the status of Kosovo, Serbian nationalists used Jewish imagery to justify claims of Kosovo by comparing antisemitism and serbophobia.[341] In the 1990s, as the conflicts spread to Croatia, Bosnia, and elsewhere, Serbian nationalists often drew on the Holocaust to promote the myth of Serbian victimhood and martyrdom. In addition, historical revisionism denies Serbia's antifascism, and many sites of the Holocaust, such as the Sajmište concentration camp, are still not commemorated. Serbia was the target of NATO military intervention in 1999, which prompted the evacuation of a significant portion of Serbia's Jewish community, first to Budapest and eventually to Israel.[342] The 2011 census recorded only 787 people as Jewish. Judaism remains one of the seven recognized traditional religious communities in Serbia. Serbia's small Jewish community, which has been very active despite its history, has recently undergone an acrimonious division over leadership and funds allocated to compensate for heirless Jewish property.

The Jewish Minority in Serbia Today

Antisemitism is generally unpronounced in Serbia. While there are sporadic incidents, such as occasional appearances of neo-Nazi graffiti in Belgrade and Novi Sad in previous years, they are condemned by state authorities, NGOs and Serbia's Commissioner for Protection of Equality.

337 Holokaust. "Semlin Judenlager in Serbian public memory," June 30, 2020. http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/semlin/en/semlin-judenlager.php.
338 "Yugoslavia Virtual Jewish History Tour," *Jewish Virtual Library*, 2021. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/yugoslavia.
339 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
341 "Serbia Virtual Jewish History Tour," *Jewish Virtual Library*, 2021. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/serbia-virtual-jewish-history-tour.
342 Mithell, Shulamit. "BEHIND THE HEADLINES Yugoslav Jews send e-mails to describe the crisis they face," April 12, 1999. https://www.jta.org/1999/04/12/lifestyle/behind-the-headlines-yugoslav-jews-send-e-mails-to-describe-the-crisis-they-face-2.

The views provided in this report are based on interviews with several important stakeholders based in or with connections to Serbia.[343] This report also relies on several local and international reports on human rights that deal with antisemitism

According to Robert Sabadoš of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia, latent antisemitism does exist, and usually manifests itself as accusations. Whenever something bad happens, the blame is on the Jews. "There is something in the social consciousness [in Serbia] based on dogmas that are feeding antisemitism. This latent antisemitism is floating within society, and political and religious communities should start a widespread discussion in the entire [Serbian] society." However, there is no discrimination against, or subordination of, Jews in Serbia. According to Sabadoš, the main challenge for Jews in Serbia is assimilation. The remedy Sabadoš proposes is learning that differences are "beautiful and useful...society should encourage that, as differences indeed enrich all of us."

Milovan Pisarri, a Belgrade-based historian who also runs the NGO Centre for Public History, said he "does not see" antisemitism in Serbia, apart from the aforementioned sporadic incidents. "There are not devastations of [Jewish] monuments or graves [in Serbia], which is what is happening when you have well organized neo-Nazi groups. Also, Jews are not discriminated against, either legally or from a religious perspective," he said. What the Serbian state is doing is contrary to antisemitism, Pisarri argues, bearing in mind that in 2016 Serbia adopted the Law on Removing the Consequences of Confiscation of the Property from Holocaust Victims with No Living Descendants.

Also hailed as a good move is the February 2020 adoption of the Law on Memorial Centre Staro Sajmište.[344] The law, which envisages two museums dedicated to the suffering of the Staro Sajmište and Topovske Šupe concentration camps' inmates and education and research about it, was finally approved after years of promises from various local and state authorities. The news was welcomed in Serbia and internationally by organizations including the Simon Wiesenthal Center. It remains to be seen what specific historical narratives will be presented in the museums, and whether there will be efforts to hide the role of Serbia's collaboration government, led by Milan Nedić, in sending Jews their deaths.

However, many experts remain skeptical about the law and its implementation. Among the questions they ask is who will be in charge, who will appoint directors, how much independence the Jewish community will have, what narratives will be presented and if it will propagate the narrative that Serbs and Jews suffered equally. Many are worried that some Serbian decision-makers could be tempted to combine the Staro Sajmište memorial with a previously proposed Museum of Genocide of NDH, in order to increase the blame on Croatia for crimes perpetrated against Serbs. Such a project would be extremely problematic, as Staro Sajmište itself has nothing to do with the NDH; it was established and run by representatives of Nazi Germany with aid from the Serbian collaborationist government. The law also includes another former camp, Topovske Šupe, but it

343 Sabadoš, Robert, the head of Belgrade-based Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia, Milovan Pisarri, a historian specializing in the Holocaust in occupied Serbia, Olga Deutsch, Vice President of NGO Monitor and Jovan Byford, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the Open University whose interdisciplinary research has been particularly focused on conspiracy theories, antisemitism and Holocaust remembrance in Serbia.
344 The Law on the Memorial Centre. "Start Sajmiste," November 10, 2020. Available at https://www.propisi.net/zakon-o-memorijalnom-centru-staro-sajmiste/.

remains to be seen whether that site will be preserved or transformed into a new shopping center.

Serbia's Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Brankica Janković, reiterated on several occasions that there had been no rise in instances of antisemitism or discrimination against Jews. The commissioner's last annual report, published in April, states the same.[345] Janković also said that her office, as a central state institution in charge of discrimination cases, had received no complaints of discrimination on those grounds.[346]

Olga Deutsch, vice president of NGO Monitor, argues that, in comparison with other states in the region and in Europe, "the level of antisemitism in Serbia is almost negligible." However, Deutsch warns, "it does not mean that nothing should be done to prevent that amount of antisemitism; we usually say that the level of antisemitism in a society is a good barometer of the overall situation when it comes to discrimination, hate speech, etc."

"It does not mean that nothing should be done to prevent that amount of antisemitism; we usually say that the level of antisemitism in a society is a **good barometer** of the overall situation when it comes to discrimination, hate speech, etc."

-Olga Deutsch
Vice President, NGO Monitor

The U.S. State Department's 2019 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Serbia, released in March 2020, states that antisemitic graffiti continued to be discovered throughout the country, including graffiti of swastikas on the walls of the Hungarian Embassy in Belgrade.[347]

While the law prohibits hate speech, Jewish community leaders reported that translations of antisemitic literature were available from ultranationalist groups and conservative publishers. Antisemitic works such as the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" were available for purchase from informal sellers, secondhand bookshops or posted online. Right-wing groups maintained several websites and people hosted chat rooms (although many were inactive) that openly promoted antisemitic ideas and literature, the report claims.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

Serbia has adopted several important international documents and several laws addressing antisemitic narratives and other forms of hate speech. Serbia also marks important dates related to the Holocaust, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, and Day of Remembrance for Holocaust, Genocide

345 Abridged Version of 2019 Regular Annual Report of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, July 27, 2020. http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Skraceni-redovni-godisnji-izvestaj-2019-engl.pdf.
346 Novi Magazin. *Jankovic: There is no growth of anti-Semitism in Serbia, anti-fascism is being nurtured*, Novi Magazin, October 29, 2019. http://novimagazin.rs/vesti/jankovic-u-srbiji-nema-rasta-antisemitizma-neguje-se-antifasizam.
347 Serbia Human Rights Report, June 30, 2020. Available at https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SERBIA-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf.

and Other Victims of Fascism in the Second World War, on April 22. Serbia also marks International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism on November 9.

Legal Protection and Legal Gaps

In February 2020, the government adopted the Conclusion on the Acceptance of the Legally Non-Binding IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.[348] Serbia has been a member state of the IHRA since 2011 but has cooperated with this international organization since 2006 as an observer and as a state in the process of accession since 2009. It is also a signatory to the 2009 Terezín Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets which, while not legally binding, recommends measures to remedy economic wrongs that accompanied the Holocaust against Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution in Europe. In 2016, Serbia adopted the Law on Removing the Consequences of Confiscating the Property from Holocaust Victims with No Living Descendants. As a member of the Council of Europe, Serbia has official representatives in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

The Serbian Constitution prohibits discrimination on any grounds, especially on race, gender, ethnicity, social status, birth, religion and political views. The country's criminal code and legislation tackle both hate speech and hate crimes. There are a number of criminal offenses that include "hate" in their description. For instance: provoking national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance; racial and other discrimination; violation of equality in rights; defamation based on racial, religious, national or other affiliation; violent behavior at a sporting event or public gathering.

Though none of these offenses explicitly mention Holocaust denial or antisemitism, they state that any discriminatory action against a person, due to their affiliation with a specific racial or national group, will be punished. Constitutional prohibitions of discrimination are elaborated in the Law on

Legal Gaps in Legislation



348 "Vlada Srbije, na predlog MSP, usvojila Zaključak o prihvatanju pravno neobavezujuće definicije antisemitizma Međunarodne alijanse za sećanje na holokaust," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. November 10, 2020. Available at http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/pres-servis/saopstenja/22538-2020-06-01-08-30-18?lang=lat.

Prohibition of Discrimination, which defines different forms and cases of discrimination. This law is to a great extent harmonized with E.U. regulations tackling this area.

Other important laws include anti-discrimination laws such as the Law on Protection of National Minorities' Rights and Freedoms. Other anti-discrimination measures can be found in laws such as the Labor Law and Act of Churches and Religious Communities. Besides the police and prosecution, citizens can also turn to the ombudsman and commissioner for protection of equality if they experience discrimination or antisemitism.

The Prosecutor's Office collects data on hate crimes and regularly reports this data to the ODIHR. The data reported to ODIHR also include cases of incitement of hatred and other hate speech offenses. According to the most recent available data, two incidents were reported in 2018, one concerning a Jewish tombstone being knocked down in a cemetery, and another concerning the antisemitic vandalization of an information board about a Jewish political leader.

When it comes to victim and witness protection, the most important law is the Law on Protection Programme for Participants in Criminal Proceedings. It regulates the terms and procedures for providing protection and assistance to participants in criminal proceedings and their close family members. Protection is provided to those who face danger to life, health, physical integrity, freedom or property due to testifying or providing information significant for the purpose of proving a criminal offense. There are many other national documents and sources of rights guaranteed to victims and witnesses included in the criminal code, Criminal Procedure Code, Rules of Procedure of the Court, Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Minors, Guidelines for Improving Court Practice in Compensation Proceedings for Victims of Serious Crime in Criminal Proceedings, Working Document — National Strategy on the Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Crime, and other documents.

Serbia still does not have a law prohibiting Holocaust denial. However, the parliament adopted changes to the criminal code in 2016 that proscribe punishment for those who publicly deny or promote genocide and war crimes, as recognized by the Serbian courts or the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague.[349] The decision was followed by a heated public debate. Many argued the wording was deliberate because Serbia does not officially recognize the Srebrenica massacres as genocide. Rights organizations and experts alike sharply criticized it, arguing that Holocaust and Srebrenica genocide deniers remain outside of the scope of the criminal law, as there are no Serbian court or ICC rulings on denial of the Holocaust or the Srebrenica genocide.[350]

Institutional Mechanisms

Apart from the Prosecutor's Office and the police, Serbian citizens can also turn to the ombudsman and commissioner for protection of equality in instances of hate speech and hate crimes related to antisemitism, or if they feel they have been deprived of their rights and discriminated against due to their ethnicity. Victims of antisemitism specifically can turn to those offices and to Jewish associations. However, there is a lack of detailed data on how

349 Serbia's Criminal Code. 2019. Available at https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/krivicni-zakonik-2019.html.
350 Dikovic, J, Roknic, A. "Zakon zaštitio negiranje genocida u Srebrenici" Danas, November 18, 2016. Available at https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/zakon-zastitio-negiranje-genocida-u-srebrenici/.





Former concentration camps Topovske Šupe (left) and Staro Sajmište (right) in Belgrade, Serbia.

many cases reach the prosecution stage or how many court rulings in relation to antisemitism are made. Abovementioned experts interviewed for this report argued there are not many instances of antisemitism in Serbia, which could lead one to think there are not many prosecutions for it. NGOs and Jewish organizations provide support to official structures in tracking the numbers of antisemitic instances.[351]

Serbia has been criticized on many occasions for its delay in commemorating what are often considered the largest Nazi death and concentration camps in Southeastern Europe: Staro Sajmište and Topovske Šupe. Both of these camps were used exclusively for the detention and murder of Jews and Roma. After all the Jews in the camp were gassed in the mobile gas vans in the spring of 1942, Staro Sajmište was transformed into a labor camp for political and war prisoners. Several years ago, plans were approved to build a shopping mall on the location of the Topovske Šupe camp, located within Belgrade city limits, to great condemnation from the Jewish community. According to the research on World War II memorials in Serbia and Croatia by the Center for Holocaust Research and Education, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia and the Faculty of Philosophy from Rijeka, Croatia, many Holocaust sites in Serbia are left unmarked or neglected. Topovske Šupe has a plaque, which was put up in May 2019, after the first two were stolen, while the plaque marking a site where Jews were murdered in the Belgrade municipality of Bežanija is broken and the site itself is barely accessible. According to the research, memorial parks are well maintained in the Belgrade neighborhood of Jajinci and the central Serbian town of Kragujevac, where the victims were predominantly Serbs killed by the occupying forces, while the sites of crimes against Jews and Roma have been mostly forgotten.

Educational programs about the Holocaust for schools and the public are mostly left to the civil society sector. These organizations

351 World Jewish Congress. "Serbia." 2021. https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/RS#:~:text=Jewish%20youth%20groups%20are%20particulary%20active%20within%20major,that%20caters%20to%20the%20interests%20of%20Jewish%20students.

host public discussions and visits to sites where Jews and other World War II victims were killed, conduct extensive research into the topic, organize public exhibitions, and produce reports, books and various other publications.[352] Holocaust education is part of the school curriculum. However, the way in which the roles of the collaborationist National Salvation government, led by Milan Nedić, and other collaborationist movements, especially the openly antisemitic paramilitary movement "Zbor" led by Dimitrije Ljotić, are presented and debated remains problematic in the opinion of domestic and international commentators alike. Some, including the Serbian state itself, and many right-wing historians and public figures, seek to minimize and reinterpret the role of the national collaborators.[353]

In 2016, the Ministries of Education, Science and Technological Development; Youth and Sport; and Foreign Affairs, as well as the ODIHR, signed a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of a project to prepare educational materials in Serbian, with the aim of combating antisemitism. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the activities are ongoing.

Media-Monitoring Outcomes

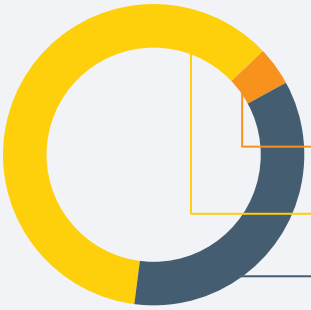
Media monitoring sources covered the most read media in Serbia in the three most commonly spoken languages in the country — Serbian (only articles using the Latin alphabet), Bosnian and Croatian. Researchers worked with 2,979 relevant online media pieces.[355] Of this number, 1,820 discussed or presented instances of antisemitism, and 116 contained antisemitic

Jovan Byford, a lecturer at the UK's Open University and an expert on the Holocaust, took part in a program aimed at giving Serbian teachers more insight into World War II and the Holocaust. The program was organized by the Paris-based Shoah Memorial in 2015 and concluded that the problem was that students were not taught enough about the Holocaust.[348]

"There is a consensus among the professors I talked to that it is not sufficiently studied, as there are only one or two lessons about it in high schools. Learning about it is not a priority," Byford explained. "There are nice examples when students organize exhibitions about the topic, but it is all at an unofficial level," he noted. "The lack of teaching about the Holocaust in schools in Serbia could be seen as part of a broader picture in which the memorialization of World War II is misused or manipulated for political advantage," he added.

352 Centre for Public History. June 30, 2020. https://www.cpi.rs/en/.
353 U.S. Department of State, "Serbia 2019 Human Rights Report." https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SERBIA-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf.
354 Nikolić, Ivana. *Serbia's Nazi Collaborators Highlight Holocaust Ignorance*, Balkan Transitional Justice, October 13, 2015. https://balkaninsight.com/2015/10/13/serbia-s-nazi-collaborators-highlight-holocaust-ignorance-10-12-2015/.
355 See section on Methodology: Categorization of Antisemitism.

Media Monitoring Outcomes



Out of 2,979 relevant media pieces:

- **3.9%** contained antisemitic statements
- **61.1%** discussed instances of antisemitism
- **35%** contributed to general discussion

Types of antisemitism discussed most:

PHYSICAL | RHETORIC | SUPPLEMENTAL RHETORIC | PROPERTY

Most common rhetorical narratives:



FALSE



SYMBOLS



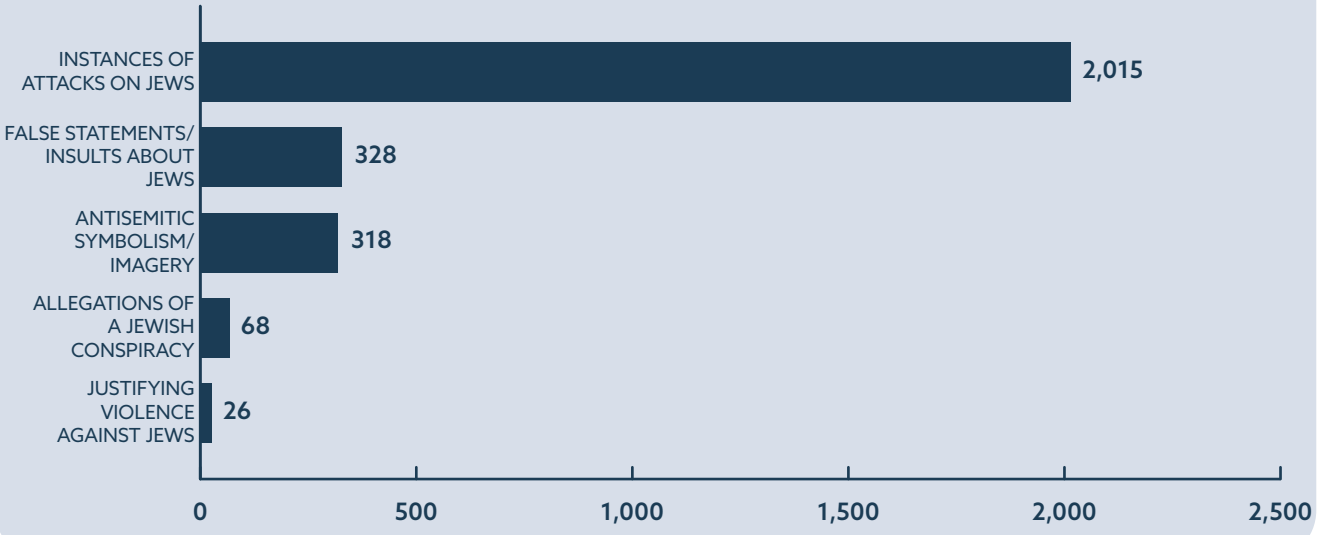
CONSPIRACY

FALSE: Making an untrue statement or spreading disinformation about Jews or Jewish institutions.

SYMBOLS: Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism; can involve literal symbols and also instances of character tropes and comparisons.

CONSPIRACY: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the power of Jews as a collective.

Most frequent mentions:



statements. The rest of the relevant media pieces contributed to general discussions and news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide.

Antisemitic statements and sentiments in general were hard to find. From time to time, there were some antisemitic incidents that media wrote critically about. Holocaust-related topics were also popular with forms of media that often use shocking headlines to increase the number of clicks. The prevailing type of antisemitism discussed or presented in online media was **physical** antisemitism. Tags for **physical** were used 2,015 times. **Rhetorical** antisemitism was also common, especially antisemitic **symbols** (tagged 318 times) and **false**, vulgar or inappropriate language (**false** was used 328 times). Antisemitic statements were mostly related to **conspiracy** theories (68 times) and **violence** (26 times).

The most common narrative related to Jews was not focused on antisemitism per se, but centered around Serbia and its "most important significant other," as Jelena Subotić put it, Croatia.[356] Aside from a few notable exceptions, media followed the nationalist line of the Serbian government and depicted Serbs as friends of the Jews and good neighbors fighting Nazis, while Croats were presented as intrinsically evil "Ustašas" whose NDH camps were far worse than any other concentration camp, Auschwitz included. This narrative portrayed Croatians as "genocidal peoples" and is still present in the general public, especially in academic institutions such as SANU, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Another problematic institution in this regard is the Museum of Genocide Victims, which is supposed to research genocide and the Holocaust, but is instead full of Serbian victimization narratives, denial of the Srebrenica genocide and comparing the 1999 NATO intervention with the Holocaust.

Whenever Croatia was criticized by the international community or NGOs for antisemitism, Serbian media seemed to enjoy writing bombastic articles arguing that international reports only confirmed what "we" already knew. Besides, Serbian media usually did not fact check, especially when it came to numbers of Serbs killed by NDH. This rhetoric supported the line of the Serbian nationalist elites.

Online news reported seven times about four antisemitic statements made by **public figures**. Such examples included public figures talking about exact antisemitic incidents Jews faced, or quoting reports listing incidents toward Jews such as Holocaust **denial** or negation of Israel's right to exist. There was also news about the social networks Facebook and Instagram deleting the accounts of popular white supremacists and antisemites who openly insulted or threatened Jews and denied the Holocaust.[357]

Translated Facebook comment comparing the suffering of the Serbian people to the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust.

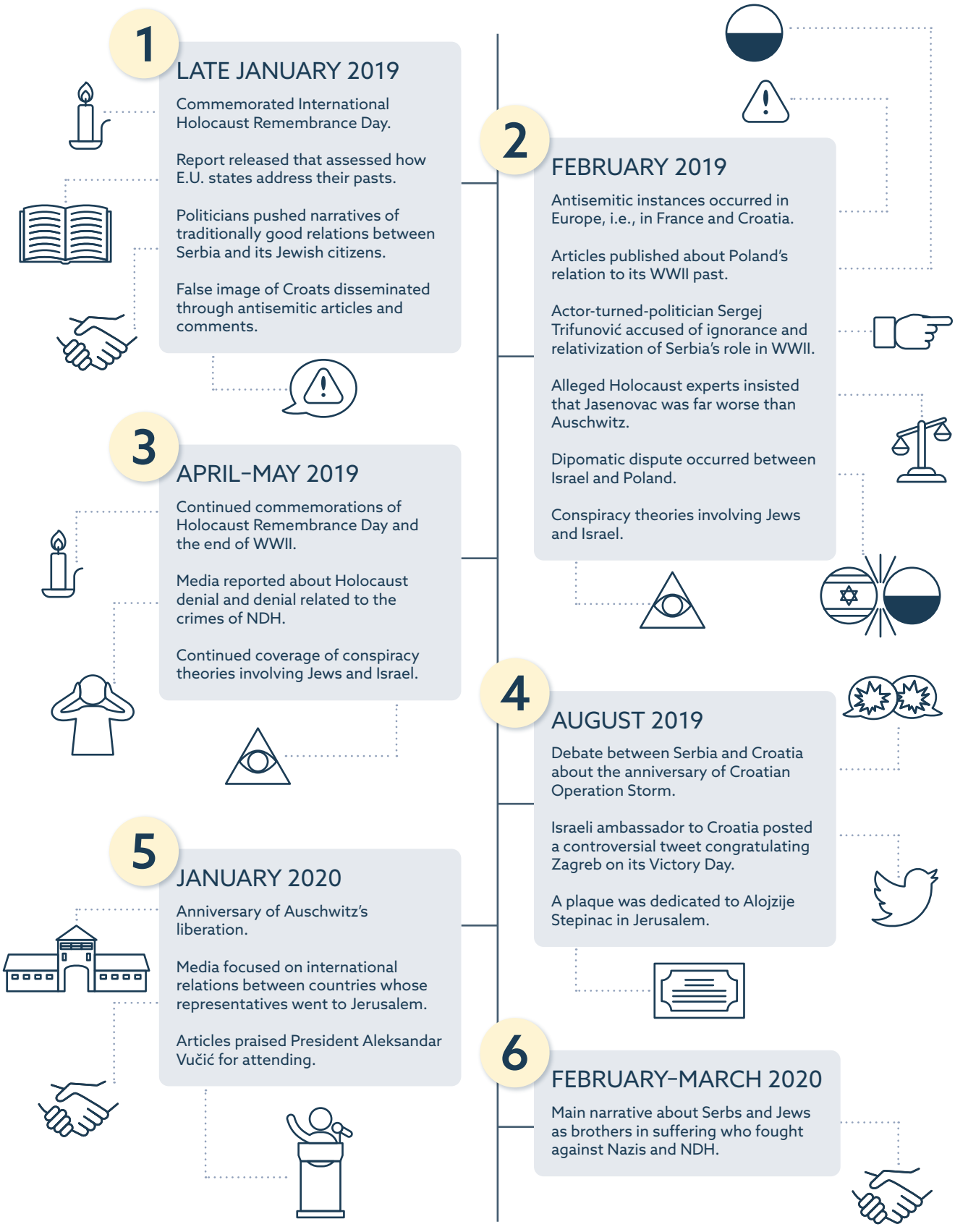


Great conclusion. I think that the Serbs are currently being treated as Jews during Nazi Germany.

356 Subotić, Jelena. *Yellow Star, Red Star Holocaust Remembrance after Communism*, (Cornell University Press, 2019).

357 Beta. "Macron: Anti-Semitism is not just a problem of the Jews. The worst crime was committed by my country. President of Germany: The worst crime was committed by my country," January 23, 2020. https://beta.rs/vesti/politika-vesti-svet/122249-makron-antisemitizam-nije-samo-problem-jevreja.

Peaks in Media Monitoring



Online media discussed antisemitism both abroad and at home, with local news prevailing in half of the time peaks and news from abroad in the other half. The country most frequently discussed was Croatia (and the Ustaša-led and Nazi-allied Independent State of Croatia), but other states, such as the United States, Germany, Poland, Israel and Russia were also mentioned, especially in the context of disputes about World War II.

Antisemitic Narratives

Antisemitic statements are used to bolster other narratives present in Serbia. These narratives primarily argue that the suffering of the Serbian people is comparable to the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. They also depict Serbs as victims in any given conflict or dispute, mostly with Croatia and Kosovo. This is the "Serbs as Jews" narrative. Another narrative worth mentioning is "Serbs and Jews as brothers in suffering and eternal friends." In that regard, Serbs are always exclusively seen as "good neighbors" to Jews living in Serbia, while past misdeeds, such as the actions of the Serbian collaborationist government during World War II are intentionally omitted. There are also a lot of attempted connections made to to seek acknowledgment of Serb suffering throughout history. Some examples of messages repeatedly present in the media include: acknowledging that Jews suffered in World War II, but saying Serbs were also killed on a large scale during the same war, and yet that act does not officially constitute a genocide or Holocaust; or saying six million Jews were killed in the war, but the world turns a blind eye to the fact that Operation Storm in Croatia in 1995 killed or displaced thousands of Serbs. This is not to say that Serbs deny or diminish the Holocaust, even though there are many examples of this; it is rather about their urge to have their own suffering internationally acknowledged and to be recognized as victims.

The **first time peak** — late January 2019 — corresponded with two main political events and both were related to Serbia: International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the publishing of the report "Holocaust Remembrance Project: How European Countries Treat Their Wartime Past," which assessed how E.U. states address their pasts.[358] The main topics in this time peak included Serbian politicians' narratives of traditionally good relations between Serbia and its Jewish citizens, with politicians in Serbia talking about a law on the restitution of Holocaust victims' assets, which the parliament passed in 2016, and even admitting the role of the local quisling government and other collaborators.[359] Another dominant topic centered around the false image of Croats, who were depicted as revisionists and deniers whose main intention was to imprison and kill Serbs, suggesting that



That's how Jews work, and they bomb us, kill us, BUT we run to get in their ass.

Translated Facebook comment on an article titled, "Zuroff: The Jews will protest if Stepinac is declared a saint."

358 The Holocaust Revisionist Report, a study examining how individual European Union states deal with the legacy of the Second World War crimes, was published on January 25, 2019. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c1aa54_d6fdacf05b6845a3a2cacbf80ed6720c.pdf.

359 B92. "We don't need to compete in crimes, they are monsters," January 25, 2020. https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2019&mm=01&dd=25&nav_category=12&nav_id=1497981.

camps were established primarily for Serbs rather than Jews.[360] Many antisemitic articles and comments used the aforementioned report and other problematic events in Croatia, such as when state officials did not mention Jasenovac victims on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, to depict Croats as intrinsically bad and evil, while claiming Serbs have always been on the right side of history.[361] Actors present in these media pieces were mostly politicians, clergy, historians, journalists and members of the Jewish community.[362] Interestingly, news about Holocaust Remembrance Day triggered a discussion among readers about Serbia-Kosovo relations and international players, Jews and Israel included, who support one side or another. While the state of Israel was not particularly mentioned in this peak, Jews and their communities were. There was a tendency for Serbs to portray themselves as victims who have suffered the same as, or even more than, the Jews. This appeared both in the comments sections and in the articles themselves. Jasenovac was portrayed as a concentration camp worse than Auschwitz where Serbs, as the main victims, were in a worse position than Jews in Auschwitz, as "they had to face the personal hatred of their murderers."[363] Apart from victimization and relativization, this time peak was characterized by a number of conspiracy theories and false statements, such as that Jews run the world and pull all strings, focus on their World War II past too much, and bear responsibility for wars and conflicts.

The most common topics reported on in the **second time peak** — February 2019 — were antisemitic instances in Europe, especially in France and Croatia.[364] There were also a lot of articles about Poland's relation to its World War II past and the way it affected Poland's relations with Israel and Germany. What was directly connected to Serbia was the statement of prominent actor-turned-opposition-politician Sergej Trifunović, who was accused of ignorance and relativization of Serbia's role in World War II.[365] His statement caused an avalanche of criticism among politicians, representatives of the Jewish community and ordinary people. Another important narrative connected to Serbia was about Jasenovac, again in relation to the number of people killed there and the insistence of alleged Holocaust experts that Jasenovac was far worse than

360 MOCT. "Each of our stories about the Holocaust begins in Jasenovac," January 27, 2019. https://tvmost.info/post/svaka-nasa-prica-o-holokaustu-pocinje-u-jasenovcu; https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:773957-IZVESTAJ-EKSPERATA-Hrvati-poricu-sv oje-zlocine-o-Holokaust.

361 MOCT. "Linta: Jandrokovic's shameful speech does not mention the suffering of Serbs," January 26, 2019. https://tvmost.info/post/linta-sraman-govor-jandrokovica-ne-pominje-stradanje-srba.t.

362 As this peak coincides with the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, many church officials were quoted/interviewed in the media, such as Serbian bishop Jovan Culibrk and Croatian Cardinal Bozanic.

363 Politika. "Each of our stories with the Holocaust begins with Jasenovac," January 28, 2019. http://www.politika.co.rs/sr/clanak/421408/Region/Svaka-nasa-prica-o-Holokaustu-pocinje-u-Jasenovcu.

364 Danas. "Police are investigating anti-Semitic graffiti on the window of a bakery in Paris," February 10, 2019 https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/policija-istrazuje-antisemitski-grafit-na-izlogu-pekare-u-parizu/; "Anti-Semitism rallies in France tomorrow," February 18, 2019. https://www.danas.rs/svet/sutra-u-francuskoj-skupovi-protiv-antisemitizma/; 021 "Bulgarian right-wingers marched in honor of the pro-Nazi general," February 17, 2019. https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Region-i-svet/208295/VIDEO-Bugarski-desnicari-marsirali-u-cast-pronacistickog-g enerala.html.

365 Sergej Trifunović, apparently out of ignorance, said that it does not matter if someone puts photos of Draža Mihailović or Dimitrije Ljotić on their walls. Dimitrije Ljotić was a Serbian politician who, during WWII, closely collaborated with Nazi Germany and led a notorious military squad that was allegedly responsible for numerous murders of non-Serbs; Dragoljub 'Draža' Mihailović was a general and a leader of the Chetnik movement, which committed large-scale crimes and other atrocities against non-Serb civilians during the war. Mihailović was prosecuted for high treason and collaboration with Nazi Germany by a Yugoslav court after the war ended and sentenced to death. He was rehabilitated by a Serbian court in 2015. Tanjung, D.K. "Jews in Serbia had a lot of nonsense, it's time for Trifunovic to learn everything he slept on at school," February 11, 2019. https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/jevrejima-u-srbiji-je-bilo-dosta-gluposti-vreme-je-da-trifunovic-nauci-sve-sto-jeprespavao-u-skoli/211464/vest.

Auschwitz.[366] The most present actors of this time peak were international politicians, public figures, journalists and historians from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, the United States, Israel and Croatia. The presence of these actors was triggered by the diplomatic dispute between Israel and Poland, in which Israeli officials argued that many Poles collaborated with the Nazis and thus should bear responsibility for the Holocaust. As a result, a Visegrad 4 Summit in Israel was cancelled.

There were also several conspiracy theories involving Jews and the state of Israel (such as accusations that Jews control 70 percent of U.S. wealth, or that Russia and Israel brought Donald Trump to power) as well as examples of Serb victimization ("what Jews were in the past now are Serbs") and relativization (that the suffering of Serbs in Jasenovac was much worse than that of Jews in Auschwitz). There were also statements claiming that Jews and Serbs have always had good relations because their tragic destinies brought them together.

The most common topics reported on in the **third time peak** — April to May 2019 — were again related to Holocaust Remembrance Day and commemorations in Jerusalem and Belgrade of the end of World War II. The media reported about Holocaust denial and denial related to the crimes of the NDH in Jasenovac and elsewhere in Croatia, as well as denial of Alojzije Stepinac's role in the NDH.[367] Most present actors of this time peak were international and domestic politicians, public figures, clergy and historians. Some other states were also in focus, such as Poland, Russia, Croatia and Israel. This time peak also repeated some of the above-mentioned conspiracy theories surrounding Jews and Israel, as well as comments insisting on the joint suffering of Serbs and Jews.

In the **fourth time peak** — August 2019 — media attention centered around the debate between Serbia and Croatia concerning the anniversary of Croatian Operation Storm, which Croats see as a victory and Serbs as a defeat.[368] The media reported on the tweet of the Israeli ambassador to Croatia, who congratulated Zagreb on its Victory Day and then was criticized by many, including historian and Nazi hunter Efraim Zuroff.[369] The diplomat later edited his tweet to

366 Serbian nationalistic political elites and the vast majority of the mainstream media argue that some 800,000 Serbs were killed in Jasenovac (links: https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:774866-Prof-dr-Gideon-Grajf-Ustase-u-Jasenov cu-ubijale-na-57-nacina; https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/drustvo/3198935/jasenovac-imperija-smrtiubijeno-minimum-800000-srba-i-40000-jevr eja; https://srbin.info/pocetna/aktuelno/ovo-je-tacan-broj-zrtava-u-jasenovcu-ispovest-patologa-srbe-su-zive-kuvali/). However, relevant authors, such as Ivo Goldstein, argue the numbers are far smaller (around 120,000 casualties on all sides). His claims are supported by some Serbian authors (link: http://www.politika.co.rs/sr/clanak/426657/Drustvo/Goldstajn-U-Jasenovcu-je-stradalo-oko-120-000-ljudi). Also, according to the Jasenovac Memorial Site, the Ustaša killed over 83,000 Serbs, Jews, Roma and anti-fascists at the camp between 1941 and 1945. Most scholarly consensus on Jasenovac puts the number of killed somewhere in between 85,000-120,000. The Serbia nationalist elites' urge to exaggerate the numbers is clear, as well as their Croatian counterparts' attempts to downplay it.

367 Denial mostly comes from people globally, or from some specific groups of people, for example Croats who say Alojzije Stepinac or NDH are not responsible for massacres, or those who say Jasenovac was a work camp. Controversial Zagreb archbishop Alojzije Stepinac was close to the wartime authorities of NDH. Stepinac has long been a figure whose legacy caused friction between Croatia and Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church accuses him of failing to condemn atrocities against Serbs and Jews in Croatia during the war, and he remains a hate figure in Serbia. In Croatia, by contrast, Catholics revere his memory and, together with the Croatian government, have long campaigned for his sanctification.

368 Operation Storm saw Croatian troops defeat the forces of the unrecognized rebel Serb wartime statelet (Republic of Serbian Krajina), and practically end the war in the country. However, it is widely seen as a stumbling block between Serbia, which mourns the hundreds killed and the 200,000 who became refugees, and Croatia, which celebrates it as a victory.

369 Efraim Zurof is the chief Nazi-hunter of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the founder and director of its Israel office. He is also a prominent Holocaust historian.

make it more neutral. Many comments about this event were widely antisemitic, arguing that Jews were being hypocritical and that no one "normal" could trust Zionists, while other comments were full of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Another topic presented and widely discussed in this peak was a plaque dedicated to Alojzije Stepinac in Jerusalem. The media denoted this act as a shameful move by the Israeli state, saying Israel does not respect its own victims and victims of Stepinac's NDH, Serbs included.[370] Many articles and comments in this peak were antisemitic, as they accused the entire nation for something done by an individual/group of individuals. The actors present included politicians (both local and international), historians and some disputed historical figures, such as Alojzije Stepinac.

The **fifth time peak** — January 2020 — coincided with the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the vast majority of articles were about the commemorative event in Israel. The news coverage was not always necessarily related to the anniversary, but also focused on international relations between the countries whose representatives came to Jerusalem. As Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić was there, many articles (as well as under-article comments) praised his relationship with Israel and his respect for the Jewish victims. He marked the anniversary by flying a yellow flag with the Star of David from the presidency building in Belgrade. Many articles focused on antisemitic instances globally, also including local incidents in Belgrade (swastikas on bus stops). Researchers also found examples of conspiracy theories mentioned above. Actors in this time peak included international and domestic (Serbian and regional) politicians and public figures, as well as states such as Israel, the United States, France and Poland.

The **sixth time peak** — February to March 2020 — again featured the main narrative about Serbs and Jews as brothers in suffering who fought against the Nazis and the NDH, good friends who are always on the same and right side of history. The media discussed stories about Serbs risking their lives to hide Jews from the Nazis. While this narrative is partially true (in that there were certainly many cases of Jews being rescued by Serbs, mostly in the countryside), many things remained hidden or denied, such as the fact that the Serbian collaborationist government helped the Nazis (implementing racial laws, confiscating property, making lists, arresting or helping in the arrest of people). Politicians (such as Vučić and Netanyahu), historical figures (Pope Pius XII and Stepinac) and international lobby organizations such as AIPAC were among the actors most present in this time peak.

Countries Mentioned and Sources

The countries mentioned most often included important international actors, namely the United States, Russia, Israel, Poland and France, mostly in relation to the commemoration of World War II (anniversary events or disputes over historical facts, as was the case between Russia and Poland). Croatia was also among the most often mentioned countries, but in a more "domestic" realm. The media largely covered mutual accusations by Serbia and Croatia about war atrocities during World War II and the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. It seemed that Serbian nationalist media and pro-government tabloids, such as *Večernje Novosti*, *Kurir*, and *Informer* (to name just a

370 Stepinac was a very close associate of the NDH authorities (explained in greater detail in footnote 367), who established various concentration camps killing Jews, Serbs, Roma, antifascists. In that light, a plaque dedicated to the alleged Nazi accomplice was seen as extremely problematic.

few), populist politicians and a part of the public used every opportunity to talk about the NDH and its atrocities toward Serbs.

While the news mainly reported on antisemitism, antisemitic statements were present mainly in under-article comments. The 10 online media outlets with the highest number of articles reporting on antisemitism and events related to Jews and Israel were *Danas* (119), *Tanjug* (90), *Srbija Danas* (86), *RTS* (82), *B92* (80), *Kurir* (69), *Politika* (69), *Novosti* (67), *Beta* (65) and *Blic* (65). A positive finding was that *Danas*, which belongs to a handful of truly independent, objective media outlets with balanced and critical reporting, took the first place on this list. Other media mentioned included some sources (*Srbija Danas*, *Kurir*, *Blic*). While content was not antisemitic, the Holocaust, Jews and many World War II-related topics were used to make people click on articles or to boost Serbian nationalism and show how Serbs suffered in the past (for instance, the headlines drew attention with capitalized words such as "SHOCKING — BRUTAL KILLING OF 6 MILLION JEWS NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN: Today is International Holocaust Remembrance Day"; "Day when Novi Sad was SOAKED IN BLOOD: How Hungarian fascists committed an UNPRECEDENTED MASSACRE which lasted for 22 days"; "Children should be taught about the CRIMES OF SERBS: CROATS DO NOT ALLOW students to visit JASENOVAC, they deny the MASSACRE!").[371]

Top 10 media outlets

with the highest number of articles on antisemitism and events related to Jews and Israel

# of articles	media outlet
119	Danas
90	Tanjug.Exactly
86	SD SRBIJA DANAS
82	РТС ПЛАНЕТА
80	b92
69	KURIR
69	ПОЛИТИКА
67	вечерње НОВОСТИ
65	Beta
65	BLIC

371 Kurir. "Not to forget the beastal killing of 6 million Jews: Today is the international Holocaust rememberance day," January 27, 2019. https://www.kurir.rs/planeta/3195893/da-se-ne-zaboravi-zversko-ubijanje-6-miliona-jevreja-danas-je-medjunaro dni-dan-secanja-na-zrtve-holokausta/; Filipovic, Vladimir. "The day when Navi Sad was soaked in blood: How the Hungarian facists committed an unforgettable massacre that lasted 22 days," January 28, 2021. https://www.blic.rs/riznica/dan-kada-je-novi-sad-bio-natopljen-krvlju-kako-su-madarski-fasisti-pocinili/fhrevr5; Srbija Danas. "Children should be taught the crimes of the Serbs: Croats do not allow children to visit Jasenovac, they deny the massacre!," February 7, 2019. https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/region/decu-treba-uciti-o-zlocinima-srba-hrvati-ne-daju-da-daci-idu-u-posetu-jasenovcu-negiraju-pokolj-2019-02-07.

Antisemitic language was most often present in under-article comments, where it usually took the form of conspiracy theories paired with false statements and usual stereotypes about Jews and Israel. In some cases, accusations were also used (for example, in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Antisemitic statements were most often found in the following daily outlets, some of which were tabloids: *Pravda* (15, all in discussions), *Webtribune* (four in news, six in discussions), *Danas* (four in news, three in discussions), *Intermagazin* (six in discussions), *Logicno* (six in discussions), *Politika* (one in news, five in discussions), *N1* (four in news, two in discussions), *021* (three in news, two in discussions) and *B92* (one in news, three in discussions). Overall, the monitoring found 152 antisemitic statements. However, there was a very thin line between implicitly antisemitic articles and those articles covering conspiracy theories, meaning that the number of antisemitic articles could be even higher.

Media Monitoring Conclusions

Based on the media monitoring, antisemitism was not present in the Serbian media to a significant degree. While articles were not antisemitic in general, there was a widespread tendency among sources to misappropriate topics related to the Holocaust and persecution of Jews and Serbs in order to get more clicks. Many other media outlets used the topic of the Holocaust to talk about narratives related to Serbian nationalism. What was worrisome, however, were under-article comments and posts on Facebook. They were full of conspiracy theories and inappropriate language against Jews and Israel. In these, Jews were accused of almost anything, from causing global poverty and coronavirus, to financing Hitler and pulling all the strings on a global level.

The aforementioned antisemitic narratives in online media exacerbate many existing social vulnerabilities: ghettoizing a minority group and fostering conspiracy theories about Jews, Israel and Zionists; and sharing false statements in relation to Jews and many World War II events. Widespread discrimination against Jews is not present in Serbia. However, the extent to which it is present might have some consequences. For instance, it might lead to more negative stereotypes about Jews, and to further expansion of conspiracy theories involving their community and the state of Israel.

Conclusion

As can be seen from this report, the primary antisemitic narratives found within Serbia are related to conspiracy theories and accusations involving Jews, Israel and Zionists. They are usually accused of various misdeeds on a global scale, such as causing wars (including World War II), poverty and coronavirus, as well as of controlling global finances and major international actors, while notable people of Jewish descent (George Soros, Madeleine Albright) were also often targeted.[372] In the vast majority of cases, this was mostly found in under-article comments and social media posts. A total of 24 comments were flagged to be reported over their explicit antisemitic language, swearwords and positive stances toward fascism during media monitoring.

While comments sections are problematic, openly antisemitic content is usually not found in the news. However, Jovan Byford, one of the experts consulted for this report, argues that the much-hailed

372 Albright served as the US Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001, under President Bill Clinton. Her post coincided with the Kosovo war (1998-1999) and the US-led NATO bombardment of Serbia (then Yugoslavia), which is why she is broadly seen as an enemy of the Serbian people.

love and friendship between Serbs and Jews, which Serbian nationalistic elites and politicians insist upon, contains instances of antisemitism.[373] Byford argues that categorical denial of any instances of antisemitism in Serbia is problematic, as it does not offer any real evidence but rather calls on common sense and is presented as an acknowledged truth that should not be doubted. When talking about the centuries-long friendship between the two groups, Serbian media, politicians, and nationalist elites purposefully omit important historical facts and interpret history selectively, in accordance with their ideological orientation and political needs. In that regard, situations in which Jews were being persecuted or deprived of their property and rights are not mentioned (not only during World War II, but before that, as well, especially in the beginning of 19th century).

Political extremist movements in Serbia are on the margin and without serious reach. However, there was one incident involving members of two far-right groups who, in February 2018, made Nazi salutes during a rally in Belgrade to commemorate Milan Nedić.[374] Serbian anti-fascists filed criminal and misdemeanor complaints, alleging that the far-right activists broke the law prohibiting fascist and Nazi gatherings and the use of fascist and Nazi symbols.

The most dominant narrative, used by Serbian media and politicians, is the one about "Serbs as Jews." It is used in a bid to express the extent of Serbian suffering in history, especially during the NDH period. Holocaust remembrance in Serbia is not remembrance of Jews, but rather focused on Serbian victims of wars (not only during the war, but in general). According to Jelena Subotić, this type of Holocaust remembrance is best understood as "memory appropriation," in which the memory of the Holocaust is used to memorialize a different kind of suffering, such as under communism or from ethnic violence perpetrated by other groups. Many monitored articles and comments implemented this memory-appropriation technique. They tended to be false, or partially true and not well balanced, particularly in relation to numbers of Serbs killed by the NDH. In such articles and discussions, so-called experts and nationalists exaggerated those numbers, sometimes even claiming that Jasenovac was much worse than Auschwitz, or that Serbs suffered more tragic destiny in the NDH than Jews in all concentration camps during the war. As can be seen, the urge for a greater victimhood is present in the Serbian public discourse.

This can have major consequences: false statements do not contribute to peace and reconciliation, and denial and ignorance are dangerous. While the media and nationalistic elites talk about love between Serbs and Jews, their friendship, and Serbs risking their lives to save Jews in occupied Serbia, in reality, Serbia is hiding — and sometimes even denying and relativizing — its role in sending Jews to their deaths during the war.

373 Lecturer in psychology at The Open University (United Kingdom) and an expert in the Holocaust in Serbia. He has written a number of books dealing with it, such as *Staro Sajmiste: A site remembered, forgotten, contested, Denial and Repression of Anti-Semitism: Post-Communist Rehabilitation of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic* and many others.

374 Milan Nedić was a Yugoslav and Serbian army general and politician who collaborated with the Germans and served as the Prime Minister of a puppet government.

Synthesis of Key Country Outcomes

With some deviations, the historical background of Jewish settlement and life in Western Balkan countries followed similar patterns until the beginning of the 20th century. In all seven countries, Jewish communities have centuries-long traditions and their religion was respected, or at least tolerated. Despite periods of violence against Jews, such as the Serbian national uprising in the 1830s, they lived in the region in relative harmony with other ethnic groups for several centuries. This changed dramatically during World War II. Serbia and Croatia must cope with Nazi and Ustaša crimes perpetrated in their territory, and some chapters of this period are avoided in the country's official narrative. In contrast, Albania proudly commemorates the same period and lauds the actions of its people, who were later awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations. In all researched countries, official narratives about Jews are largely built on memorialization of events that go back to this period.

Because the lack of education about the Holocaust in school curricula was the most common gap identified by researchers, interpretation of World War II events should be seen as susceptible to disinformation. Researchers in all seven countries, especially Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, observed a common tendency for some groups to use the tragedy of the

Holocaust as, in their telling, an appropriate comparison with crimes against the local population during the wars of the Yugoslav succession. World War II events are also often interpreted as the precursor, and to some degree root cause, of violence in the wars of Yugoslav succession. The desire to ascribe responsibility for historical events and jostling to establish a regional historical memory based on country narratives remains a driving force in today's politics in the region. It is through this overarching historical and political context that narratives related to the Jews in the Western Balkans are fed. Media monitoring results in all seven countries showed that references to Jews or Jewish history in the media, antisemitic or not, often occurred when local news reporting focused on state-initiated memorialization events such as opening of new museums, the restoration of historical sites and celebration of anniversaries.

Significant space was also given to news from abroad. Aside from a limited number of antisemitic incidents, media in all researched countries often reported on the conflict between Israel and Palestine and related events in the Middle East. Despite some differences, there was substantial overlap in the time peaks, which were driven by international news such as the Auschwitz liberation anniversary in January 2020 or the opening of the Vatican archives in March 2020.

The highest percentage of antisemitic statements was present in BiH (5.8 percent) and the lowest percentage (1.3 percent) was found in North Macedonia. Out of 9,897 relevant search results examined from all seven countries, 165 (1.67 percent) contained implicit forms of antisemitism and 152 mentions (1.54 percent) contained explicit antisemitic statements. The remaining 96.79 percent presented news or views on antisemitism in the Western Balkans or contributed to general discussion or news coverage related to the Jewish community worldwide. The highest occurrence of antisemitic statements came at the end of January 2020, which likely correlated with the remembrance of Auschwitz liberation in Poland. These results support the conclusions of the country chapters in this report about a low presence of antisemitism in online media and the origin of topics triggering antisemitic speech in such media.

Although there are important historical differences that formed Western Balkan countries' relationships with their Jewish communities, the presence of antisemitism in local media does not significantly differ from country to country. Most antisemitic statements were found on Facebook and in under-article comments. Antisemitic narratives were most often variations on well-known conspiracies such as "Jews are pulling stings in world politics," "Jews create international armed conflicts to benefit from them" and "Jews control the world economy." Accusations about inventing and spreading COVID-19 — the newest antisemitic narratives spread in different parts of world — were also present.



In total, **implicit antisemitism** was most often present in the form of **conspiracy theories and defamatory statements**.



Explicit antisemitism mostly took the form of open **defamatory statements and violent threats**.

Some media organizations also introduced **localized narratives** specific to their countries. These often appeared to make well-known international narratives relevant to their local news audiences which spread antisemitism more effectively.

Some countries also introduced localized narratives specific to their countries. These often appeared to make well-known international narratives relevant to their countries to spread antisemitism more effectively.

On second look, however, one can see that it is often the other way around; antisemitism is sometimes used as a tool to sow or intensify internal conflict. Albania is a relevant example of this. The only noticeable antisemitic narrative in Albania relates to George Soros' alleged impact on politics there, and this is used as a weapon between the governing and opposition parties. Another example is related to historical revisionism in Croatia, where researchers noticed a link between the normalization of usage of Ustaša symbols in attempts to diminish or negate the fascist character of the Ustaša regime. Worth mentioning is disinformation about the number of Jews and Serbs killed in Croatian concentration camps that is spread by the Serbian media and many officials, including academic institutions, and fuels the rivalry between the two countries, Serbia and Croatia, by portraying Serbs as friends of Jews in fighting Nazis, while Croats are presented as evil Ustaša. The antisemitic narrative related to Jews as representatives of U.S. elites thrived mainly in Kosovo and Serbia. Jews were used as a proxy for the United States, which was further used as a proxy for NATO, which played a crucial role in Yugoslav conflicts. Out of all researched countries, Montenegro was the only one where researchers didn't spot examples of antisemitism used as part of nationalist narratives.

In conclusion, the two most common categories of narratives identified in this document are the local Western Balkan narratives related to the use of the Holocaust in political debates and conflicts (memory appropriation), and narratives based on international conspiracies that have no specific link to the region (such as Jewish control of the world economy, organized by Rothschild family).

Also, recommendations given by country researchers share a similar pattern. The two main areas they target are responsibility of media and community action. The media and influential public figures who have the greatest influence should be more careful selecting words and referencing sources when speaking about sensitive historical events. It is grossly irresponsible for media to propagate sensationalist content that seeks to be purposefully shocking over balanced reporting. While it may be profitable to use such tactics, those in the media must realize that it creates the conditions for corrosive narratives to fester. As for community action, we recommend there be a stronger emphasis on active cooperation between the state and local Jewish communities to develop educational experiences as a key ingredient of antisemitism prevention.

Conclusion

There are currently fewer than 5,000 Jews living today in the countries subjected to this research. Relationships between the Jewish communities and other groups in the population are largely good and antisemitic instances in online media did not exceeded six percent of examined content. At a glance, these numbers could suggest that antisemitism does not represent a vulnerability or threat in the Western Balkans. However, there are still several good reasons why one should care about antisemitism and Jewish legacies in this region.

The research indicated not only a low presence of antisemitism, but also a certain level of indifference to the Jewish community and heritage, and its appropriation for current political agendas. This use of Jews and philosemitism as an instrument to advance one's own agenda can, in the case of narratives present in Western Balkan society, constitute or lead to antisemitic behavior. This was seen in the case of a Kosovo narrative about the U.S. Jewish community playing a decisive role in U.S. politics. Accusing other nations of being more antisemitic, or promoting the stereotype of Jews as "good neighbors" can easily lead to deepening of tensions in already divided societies or can turn into antisemitic reaction if the Jewish community doesn't show gratitude or reciprocation. In this sense, the

instrumentalization of Jews could potentially be as harmful as antisemitic statements. This phenomenon is hard to measure and requires comprehensive research about the origin, spread and targets of overarching narratives present in the society in order to be fully understood and appropriately addressed. Large-scale media monitoring of different media sources, including a selection of social media, is one of the components that could help to identify the actors and motives of this phenomenon.

Another threat indicated by this research is the existing legal and policy gaps discussed in the text above. Without attention to removing these gaps, the status quo can quickly deteriorate. The Western Balkans, like much of the rest of Europe, is seeing a rise in right-wing extremism triggered by the jump in migration in 2015. The import of radical Islamism, including increased financial influence from the Persian Gulf countries and the return of extremists who left the region to support ISIS represents another potential vulnerability. In Kosovo, Albania, and to some extent in BiH, researchers observed that followers of extreme forms of Islam spread antisemitic narratives inspired by foreign sources. At the same time, attention to the protection of minority-group rights and more targeted prosecution of hate crimes remain issues. On a policy side, neglectful maintenance of historical sites, the availability of specialized support to crime victims and inadequately regulated antisemitic literature are just some of the problems that should be solved. Most importantly, modernization of school curricula, with a focus on Holocaust education, was identified as much-needed tools to prevent antisemitism in all researched countries.

On the one hand, 2020 saw many positive messages. Media monitoring highlighted a number of richly covered speeches full of dedication to fighting antisemitism delivered by politicians. Albania's adoption of the IHRA definition was publicly welcomed by Montenegro, Kosovo and North Macedonia. Even though these actions might have been influenced by international attention to the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II or the need to show one's country in a better light during E.U. enlargement discussions, they are still laudable at the end of the day. It is a shame that in the same year there was little effort to bring words to action in solving the legal and policy issues mentioned above. It is even more disappointing to see political leaders trying to destabilize their opponents with rhetoric that pretends to focus on protection of Jews and their rights.

In a region where tensions between ethnic groups are often exacerbated by nationalist politics, both antisemitic speech and the fight against antisemitism are used as tools in regional or international political battles. Moreover, this is often done in concert with a deliberate adjusting of the historical facts to political needs. The attempts to rewrite history and influence collective memory represent a threat in every society — but in the Western Balkan region, it can potentially lead both to discrimination against one societal group and to the reopening of violent conflicts. Even if spreading joint victimhood and memory appropriation may not be intended to harm Jews, this practice ultimately makes the whole society vulnerable to (not only antisemitic) disinformation and conflict.

List of Interviews

Albania

- Tonin Gjuraj, rector of European University of Tirana and former Albanian ambassador in Israel. (Interview conducted by Blerjana Bino on October 8, 2020.)
- Ferit Duka, professor of history. (Interview conducted by Blerjana Bino on October 8, 2020).

North Macedonia

- Xhelal Neziri, investigative journalist, analyst and director of CIJ SCOOP Macedonia. (Interview conducted by Alban Bokshi, throughout this research.)
- Rashela Mizrahi, former minister of labor and social policy (2020) and member of VMRO-DPMNE's executive committee. (Interview conducted by Alban Bokshi on October 30, 2020.)

Serbia

- Milovan Pisarri, historian and director of the Centre for Public History in Belgrade. (Interview conducted by Ivana Nikolić on June 29, 2020.)
- Robert Sabadoš, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia. (Interview conducted by Ivana Nikolić on June 30, 2020.)
- Jovan Byford, senior lecturer in psychology at the Open University in the UK. (Interview conducted by Ivana Nikolić on July 10, 2020.)
- Olga Deutsch, vice president, NGO Monitor. (Interview conducted by Ivana Nikolić on June 16, 2020.)
- Bogdan Banjac, adviser, Department for Cooperation and European Integration at the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. (Interview conducted via email by Ivana Nikolić on August 4, 2020.)

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