

Press release

Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic



Annual Report on Anti-Semitic incidents in the Czech Republic in the year 2018

In 2018, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic registered **347 anti-Semitic incidents**. Such incidents, mainly the violent ones, are not always reported by their victims so the real number of anti-Semitic attacks can be in fact higher. However, violent anti-Semitic incidents continue to be rare in the Czech Republic. In 2018, there were recorded **2 cases of physical aggression** with an anti-Semitic motif, **3 cases of vandalism** of Jewish property by anti-Semitic inscriptions and **9 incidents involving threats** of violent acts, harassment or insulting, targeted to a particular person due to their actual or anticipated Jewish identity.

Nevertheless, the rise in anti-Semitic sentiments in the Czech Republic is particularly evident on the Internet, where the number of published anti-Semitic articles, social media posts, anonymous comments and discussion posts has been increasing for a long time. Anti-Semitic hate speech on the Internet constitutes almost 93% of all recorded incidents.

The Annual Report brings data on manifestations of anti-Semitism in the Czech Republic and therefore focuses primarily on domestic events and the social climate. However, anti-Semitic incidents often reflect foreign affairs, respond to news in the media, and may be part of global challenges or actions. Given the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union, global threats and media and internet connectivity, it is necessary to perceive this in European and world context.

The report works with the Working Definition of anti-Semitism approved by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic adopted a resolution on the Definition of anti-Semitism on January 25, 2019, the Senate of the Parliament two days later. The Federation was using the Definition already in past years.

Anti-Semitic violence and discrimination continue to be rare in the Czech Republic and the Czech Republic remains a safe country in this respect, even in comparison with other EU countries. However, the rise in anti-Semitic sentiments is particularly evident in the Czech media and social media, where the number of published anti-Semitic articles, posts, and anonymous comments has been increasing for a long time. Anti-Semitic contributions appear also on the extreme right and anti-liberal websites or in the speeches of BDS activists. Disinformation platforms, often pro-Kremlin ones, of which over 36% of all recorded incidents originate in 2018 are a distinctive basis for anti-Semitic texts in the Czech Republic. In 64% of cases, the content of false, vulgar or stereotypical claims about Jews dominated; it is very common to spread conspiracy theories about the myth of world Jewry, its control over the media, the economy, governments and other public institutions. Cases of new anti-Semitism, applying to Israel standards of behavior that are not applied to other democratic states, or collectively accusing Jews of the actions of the State of Israel, accounted for less than 29% of all recorded incidents.

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There was an increased number of incidents recorded in May 2018, when anti-Semitism manifestations were shaped especially by the move of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and the subsequent unrest in Gaza.

However, the Czech Republic remains a safe country for the Jewish community, compared to other countries in the Central European region and Western Europe. Anti-Semitic manifestations, as demonstrated by the analysis of recorded incidents, are in most cases limited to the Internet.

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Contacts:

Petr Papoušek President of Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic,
mobile: +420 608 318 874, email: petr.papousek@fzo.cz

Tomáš Kraus, Executive Director of Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic,
mobile: +420 603 237 957, email: tomas.kraus@fzo.cz