



Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union

**They Are Ethnic Jews.
Antisemitism and Attitudes Towards Israel in
Russia and Ukraine in the Context of the War
(2022 - 2024)**

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1. Summary

February 24, 2022, brought the entire international community's attention to the post-Soviet space. On October 7, 2023, the ruthless attack on Israel by Hamas terrorists was a clear illustration that the Kremlin is not alone in its willingness to shed a sea of blood to achieve its cannibalistic goals. The unprecedented wave of Jew hatred that followed around the world recalled the darkest periods of history. Paradoxically, against the backdrop of increased interest in antisemitism and increased attention to Russia and Ukraine, there is now nothing to satisfy the demand for information about antisemitism in these countries.

Meanwhile, the situation is changing in a severe way. It is obvious that it is developing in different directions in the two countries. This is all the more noteworthy because previously, despite the armed conflict that has lasted since 2014 and the difference in the political system and public sentiments, the manifestations of antisemitism until recently could largely be characterized by features common to almost the entire post-Soviet space.

The situation with antisemitism in the post-Soviet space was virtually unaffected by the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The "carriers" of antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine remained the traditional groups - neo-Nazis, other ultra-right, and simply radical nationalists, as well as members of conservative religious groups. "Left-wing" intellectual antisemitism was generally uncharacteristic of post-Soviet countries. Compared to the United States and Western European countries, the number of recorded crimes (physical violence and acts of vandalism) motivated by antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine is minuscule, with a long-term trend toward a gradual decrease in their number.

In the last three years, the image of Jews and Israel has been rethinking in Russia and Ukraine in the context of a full-scale war, which radically changes the optics. In this situation, opposing tendencies are clearly manifested in the two warring countries.

In Russia, due to the general logic of propaganda support for the aggression against Ukraine, antisemitism has taken a firm place in the state ideology. Russian President Vladimir Putin regularly makes anti-Semitic statements. There has been a shift in public sentiment about the Middle East conflict - Israel has lost the sympathy of most Russians. The most aggressive manifestations of antisemitism, up to and including terrorist acts, are primarily associated with radical Islamist groups.

The number of anti-Semitic incidents in Ukraine has noticeably decreased, and the recorded cases are generally of a less significant nature than previously. The state has strengthened the legislative framework for combating antisemitism, and the detection rate of anti-Semitic crimes has increased. Ukrainian society as a whole feels solidarity with the people of Israel. However, Ukrainian society is under significant stress in the context of the war. The common challenges that Ukraine is likely to face may negatively impact the situation with antisemitism in the near future.

The dynamics of the situation may make the conclusions of this report obsolete rather quickly. In order to better understand what is happening in Russia and Ukraine, it seems important to implement an ongoing program to monitor manifestations of antisemitism.

February 24, 2022 drew the attention of the entire international community to the post-Soviet space. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine became one of the most serious tests for the entire system of global security since World War II. The geopolitical situation, which had generally developed over the three and a half decades after the end of the Cold War, and which had been able to provide balance and stability in the world, has receded into the past before our eyes. The Kremlin's aggressive desire to change the balance of power on the world stage has led to the formation of new military and political blocs: the Contact Group on Defense of Ukraine (the "Ramstein format"), on the one hand, and the alliance of Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Iran and, to a certain extent, China, on the other. The question of the optimal strategy to counter Russia and its allies was one of the top priorities on the agenda of the United States election. The president-elect has expressed his intention to put an end to the war, although the ideas that have been voiced do not yet look like a clear and truly realistic plan.

On October 7, 2023, the ruthless attack on Israel by Hamas terrorists was a clear illustration that the Kremlin is not alone in its willingness to spill a sea of blood in pursuit of its cannibalistic goals. Over the past year, the Middle East has supplanted Eastern Europe in international news coverage. **The unprecedented wave of Jew-hatred that has followed around the world has brought to mind the darkest periods of history.** Both in absolute quantitative terms and relative to previous years, the increase in anti-Semitic incidents following the launch of the Israel Defense Forces' Operation Steel Swords against Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip far exceeded the previous similar outbreak that accompanied the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000-2002.¹

Until the formation 20-25 years ago of the paradigm of a "new antisemitism" in which anti-Israeli sentiment plays a defining role, there was a feeling in prosperous Western democracies that antisemitism was a thing of the past. The optimistic expectations were particularly strong in the 1990s, when the Palestinian-Israeli negotiation process was accompanied by the hope for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. At the same time, in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the attention of foreign observers was drawn to the problem of antisemitism in the countries that emerged on its wreckage. The post-Soviet space, with its large Jewish population, economic problems, political instability and inter-ethnic conflicts caused concern during this period. Scholars wrote books about the "Remembrance" society and the Soviet "anti-Zionist" ideological legacy, human rights and Jewish organizations, including the UCSJ and the Vaad² of the USSR (after 1991 it split into national community associations in the new states, in Russia and Ukraine retaining the name "Vaad"), deployed a system of monitoring the situation on the ground. Fear of antisemitism

¹ For example, the Anti-Defamation League recorded ten thousand anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in the year from October 7, 2023 to October 7, 2024 (*Jonathan Greenblatt*. 10/7. A Devastating Loss and Suddenly, a Different World...// *ADL*. 10/07/2024. <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/107-devastating-loss-and-suddenly-different-world>). Antisemitic Incidents in France Up 200% This Year, Interior Minister Warns After Attempted Synagogue Arson// *The Algemeiner*. August 26, 2024. <https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/08/26/antisemitic-incidents-france-up-200-this-year-interior-minister-warns-attempted-synagogue-arson/>). In Germany, of the **approximately 5,000** anti-Semitic incidents recorded through the end of 2023, half occurred after October 7 (Germany's government commissioner for combating antisemitism said that from October 7, 2023, the country faces a "tsunami" of hatred against Jews// *Lechaim*. October 7, 2024. <https://lechaim.ru/news/upolnomochennyj-pravitelstva-germanii-po-borbe-s-antisemitizmom-zayavil-chto-s-7-oktyabrya-2023-goda-strana-stalkivaetsya-s-tsunami-nenavisti-k-evreyam/>). In Australia, number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 increased by 316% relative to the same period between 2022 and 2023 (see the Executive Council of Australian Jewry report: <https://www.ecaj.org.au/over-2000-anti-jewish-incidents-in-12-months/>). The number of anti-Semitic incidents in Argentina nearly doubled by one and a half times (*Ignacio Hintermeister*. Se incrementaron en un 44 por ciento los casos de antisemitismo en el país// *El Litoral*. 7.9.2024. https://www.ellitoral.com/informacion-general/incrementaron-44-ciento-casos-antisemitismo-pais_0_8RNPmN5yFn.html).

² "Vaad" (council) is the historical name for the central body of autonomous communal self-government of Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

was one of the factors that stimulated mass aliya to Israel and emigration to Germany and the United States, where Jews from the (former) Soviet Union were accepted as refugees. Ten years later, against the backdrop of the al-Aqsa Intifada, it became obvious that the potential of antisemitism in Western Europe and North America had been underestimated. The situation in the former Soviet Union, on the contrary, gave the impression of stabilizing, and gradually ceased to be of special interest even to such specialized organizations as the Anti-Defamation League.

Some interest in the topic of antisemitism in the post-Soviet space increased a decade ago, after the Russian occupation of Crimea and the start of armed aggression in Donbas in 2014. On the one hand, their antisemitism was willingly demonstrated by high-ranking functionaries of the pro-Russian proxy regimes in Donetsk and Luhansk³, as well as by numerous Russian national radicals, including outspoken neo-Nazis, who traveled to fight in Ukraine. On the other hand, the **Kremlin has actively used Ukraine's accusations of antisemitism** to discredit the country, which has been subjected to aggression, in the international arena⁴. Paradoxically, Russian propaganda since 2014 has not been reluctant to use a light version of antisemitism itself for domestic audiences⁵. In the quite mainstream media controlled by the Russian government, Maidan was portrayed as both a Nazi putsch and a Jewish conspiracy⁶. Because of the tinge of sensationalism, the topic of instrumentalizing antisemitism in the context of the budding Russian-Ukrainian war became attractive to authors who previously had little interest in the issue. Often, their pretended analytical attempts to exploit the audience's agitated demand for exoticism only confused the readers⁷. In addition, **information space was littered with purposeful disinformation and manipulation produced by the Kremlin and its associated propaganda structures**, which sometimes even pretended to be human rights organizations⁸. With the help of financial leverage, Russian-affiliated Jewish philanthropists, such as Vyacheslav (Moshe) Kantor or Mikhail Mirilashvili, indirectly influenced the assessments of the situation in the post-Soviet space by the world centers for the study of antisemitism and the Holocaust⁹. As a result, when the information wave subsided, it left the generally interested audience more disoriented than understanding the issue.

In recent years, an outside observer interested in the topic of antisemitism in the post-Soviet space has faced a lack of information and expertise. Whereas ten years ago several organizations

³ See, for example: Antisemitism flourishes in the "DNR" and "LNR"// *ZMINA*. November 8, 2015. https://zmina.info/ru/news-ru/v_dnr_i_lnr_procvitaje_antisemitizm/

⁴ See, e.g.: *Vyacheslav Likhachev*. Instrumentalization of Antisemitism in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict// *Tirosh - Works on Judaic Studies*. Vp.20. 2020. 339-351. <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=13111>

⁵ See, for example: NTV: antisemitism as a propaganda weapon against Ukraine// *Eurasia Jews*. 30.03.2014. <http://jewseurasia.org/page16/news44168.html>

⁶ See, e.g.: *Viktor Shnirelman*. "Maidan" as a "Khazar conspiracy" // *Khazar Almanac*. 2016. T. 14. C. 285-321. <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/171776/16-Shnirelman.pdf>

Semyon Charny. "The Jewish Question" and the "Ukrainian crisis" of 2014-2015: manifestations of antisemitism and political-technological accusations of antisemitism // *Forum of Modern East European History and Culture*. 2015. № 2 (12). C. 27-34. <https://www1.ku.de/ZIMOS/forum/docs/forumruss24/03Semen%20Charnyj>

⁷ See, e.g.: *Sam Sokol*. Putin's Hybrid War and the Jews: Antisemitism, Propaganda, and the Displacement of Ukrainian Jewry. New York: Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy, 2019.

⁸ See for example: *International Human Rights Movement "World without Nazism"*. The White Papers of Hate - 2015. Moscow: Book Club Knigovek, 2015. <https://civic-nation.org/upload/iblock/a1e/a1e9070cebb784357f350e22d983b240.pdf>; *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*. White Book on Violations of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Ukraine. Moscow: 2014. <https://mid.ru/upload/archive/28781415c6a7b52fd51eae7c2944d4b4.pdf>

⁹ Vyacheslav (Moshe) Kantor, who headed the European Jewish Congress for fifteen years (2007-2022), funded the Center for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism (renamed after him) at Tel Aviv University. The center's reports were widely used in Russian propaganda, see, for example, Miloslav Yanopolsky: Miloslav Janopolski. The oppression of Jews has intensified in Ukraine/LENTA.RU. April 7, 2021. <https://lenta.ru/news/2021/04/07/antisemitizm/>

tried, with varying degrees of success, to do a consolidated monitoring of antisemitism in the countries of the region (as an example, one can recall the periodic reports of the Eurasian Jewish Congress¹⁰), today there is nothing of the sort. The Eurasian Jewish Congress, after the arrival in 2017 of a new leadership loyal to the Kremlin, curtailed its work on monitoring antisemitism.

Even at the level of individual countries, the situation with collecting information from the field has been getting worse in recent years. In Ukraine, the need to respond to the challenges posed by a full-scale war has changed priorities and reoriented the activities of Jewish communal organizations in general. The last published annual report on antisemitism of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine dates to 2021¹¹. The Vaad of Ukraine did not even have time to publicize the 2021 report before the full-scale war began. Indeed, foreign journalists, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and other international organizations operate freely in the country, so that with desire and persistence an outside observer can get a general idea of the situation in Ukraine. Access to information from Russia is more difficult. Sokhnut has been forced to cease operations, and most foreign journalists have chosen to leave. Despite modern information technology, the new "Iron Curtain" is becoming less and less transparent. At the same time, within the country itself, the study of antisemitism has become quite unpopular. The Russian Jewish Congress (RJC), the last of the Jewish communal organizations to pay attention to this topic, has not published reviews based on the monitoring of antisemitism for several years, as it used to do¹². The Sova Information and Research Center (IRC), which specializes in the study of xenophobia and hate crimes¹³, the Russian authorities have been trying to close down¹⁴ since spring 2023. Attempts by international Jewish organizations such as Sokhnut and the World Zionist Organization to include a section on the former USSR in their global reports on antisemitism only illustrate the impossibility of adequately understanding what is happening in Russia and Ukraine without knowledge of local languages and without taking into account the context¹⁵.

Thus, in recent years, a paradoxical situation has developed: **against the background of increased interest in antisemitism due to the surge of anti-Jewish manifestations worldwide after October 7 and increased attention to Russia and Ukraine due to the full-scale war, there is nothing to satisfy the demand for information on antisemitism in these countries today.**

This report does not pretend to be a full disclosure of the topic. Likely, some incidents have not come to the author's attention. Rather, this text is intended to provide an overview of the current situation of antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine. **A full-fledged comprehensive report on the issue can be prepared on the basis of continuous systemic monitoring.**

¹⁰ The Sova Information Center remains the source of the most complete and reliable information on hate crimes in Russia as a whole (see: <https://www.sova-center.ru/>), but does not track antisemitism separately.

¹¹ See: Antisemitism in Ukraine. Report for the year 2021. [https://jew.org.ua/images/pdf/AntisemitismUKR2021_compressed%20\(1\).pdf](https://jew.org.ua/images/pdf/AntisemitismUKR2021_compressed%20(1).pdf). For previous reports of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine for 2018 - 2020, see: <https://jew.org.ua/ua/antisemitism>.

¹² According to its latest annual report for 2023 (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RH-EuUCMax3GX4sC73JsT9uzRmKZIfcv/view>), the RJC continues its "Countering Antisemitism" program, including "daily monitoring of anti-Semitic manifestations" and has even "intensified its work" and "implemented monitoring of social media posts for anti-Semitic speech," but no public results of this work have been released.

¹³ See archive of materials: <http://jewseurasia.org/page443>

¹⁴ The court liquidated the information and analytical center "Sova". It investigated xenophobia in Russia// *BBC News. Russian service*. April 27, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-65012115>

¹⁵ See: World Zionist Organization. The Department for Combating Antisemitism & Enhancing Resilience. <https://www.wzo.org.il/department/combating-antisemitism/home/en>. A report by the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs may also be mentioned solely as a curiosity: <https://>

2. Background: Features of Antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine until February 24, 2022

Before we turn to analyzing the situation in Russia and Ukraine with the outbreak of a full-scale war, it is necessary to recall what it was like the day before. Since quite detailed information for the previous period can still be found in the above-mentioned sources, it seems possible to limit ourselves here to short theses reminding us of the main trends. Each of the following statements deserves a detailed explanation or justification. However, given the chronological framework of this report, it seems possible to limit ourselves to simple statements

- **The situation with antisemitism in the post-Soviet space was virtually unaffected by the dynamics of the Palestinian/Arab-Israeli conflict¹⁶.** Accordingly, the outbreaks of anti-Semitic incidents, which in many countries of the world, including the United States, were recorded during periods of aggravation of the situation in the Middle East, did not affect Russia and Ukraine

- **The "carriers" of antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine remained traditional groups - neo-Nazis, other far-right and simply radical nationalists, as well as members of conservative religious groups,** in contrast to Western countries, where both the ideological emphasis and the personal composition of anti-Semitic movements in recent decades have been shifting from the "right" to the "left" of the political scale, and the "carriers" of the most radical views have come from migrant communities. **"Left-wing" intellectual antisemitism,** associated with a broader anti-colonial ideological narrative, **was not characteristic of post-Soviet countries in general,** and especially not of young people (which also contrasts sharply with the situation in the West). Ukrainians had a strong aversion to anything associated with Soviet-era propaganda rhetoric, including the hypocritical "anti-Zionism". Russians, too, until recently were more inclined to sympathize with Israel than with the Palestinians, projecting their situation of confrontation with Islamist terrorism onto the Middle East context (partly due to the instrumentalization of a real problem by the authorities to justify the transit from unstable democracy to repressive authoritarianism).

- Compared to the United States and Western European countries, the **number of recorded crimes (physical violence and acts of vandalism) motivated by antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine seems minuscule.** Western and Israeli observers often even express doubts about the published data, suggesting that law enforcement agencies in the post-Soviet countries do not record crimes at all or qualify them with a motive (and, consequently, they are not included in official statistics) and that monitoring organizations are unprofessional, lack resources, or seek to present their country in the best light. In the context of the instrumentalization of antisemitism in propaganda, it is true that even professional researchers are often caught up in political polemics¹⁷. However, it is still more about assessments and interpretation¹⁸, rather than a desire to withhold some facts or underestimate quantitative indicators. At least, none of the foreign critics has ever been able to add a report on a single incident not accounted for by local monitors.

- In the last ten years, **fewer anti-Semitic crimes (physical attacks and acts of vandalism) have been recorded in Russia than in Ukraine.** Previously, more anti-Semitic crimes were recorded in Russia than in Ukraine, but law enforcement agencies, as part of a general "tightening of the screws,"

¹⁶ See on this, e.g.: *Mikhail Chlenov*. Peculiarities of Antisemitism in the Former USSR // *Eurasia Jews*. September 2010. <http://jewseurasia.org/page478>

¹⁷ See on this, e.g.: *Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin*. Antisemitism and Philo-Semitism in Russia and Ukraine: from Evolution to Revolution. Tel Aviv: Center for the Jewish Diaspora at Tel Aviv University March 2019. https://institute.eajc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/monography_web.pdf

¹⁸ See on this, e.g.: *Ze'ev Hanin*. Antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine: reports and polemics/*Euro-Asian Jewish Policy Papers*, No 14, February 24, 2019. <https://institute.eajc.org/eajpp-14/>

were able to disrupt the unprecedented wave of hate crimes in general, including anti-Semitic crimes, observed between 2002 and 2012

- **Russia has widely used speculation on the alleged "constant" rise of antisemitism in Ukraine to discredit the country** and justify direct interference in its internal affairs¹⁹. The accusations did not stop even after the full-scale invasion began²⁰

- **In Ukraine, however, there has been a steady and long-term downward trend in the number of anti-Semitic crimes.** Over the entire period of observation, the maximum number of anti-Semitic incidents of violence was recorded in 2004-2007, acts of anti-Semitic vandalism - in 2014-2017²¹. Thus, in Ukraine, with some lag, the same downward trend in the number of anti-Semitic crimes was recorded as in Russia a few years earlier.

- **A certain number of anti-Semitic incidents in Ukraine were the result of provocation** rather than a "natural" manifestation of the criminal inclinations of sincere Judeophobes. Since not all crimes have been solved, and because of the tendency of law enforcement agencies to abuse claims of antisemitism being inspired from outside, it is difficult to say reliably what the proportion of provocative incidents was. Presumably, in the last years before a full-scale war, it was between a quarter and a third of all recorded cases.

- **Blatantly anti-Semitic rhetoric has been much more widespread in the former Soviet Union than in Western Europe.** Elements of antisemitism are widely used in mass culture, especially of a satirical nature, or in amateur art²². Literature promoting the Jewish conspiracy theory circulated quite freely. Anti-Semitic statements were tolerated by public figures, including political figures. This was primarily due to a general low culture of public communication, far from modern Western standards of political correctness. The situation was changing for the better, but slowly. In Russia, as "anti-extremist" legislation was strengthened, the prosecution and for hate speech directed at Jews gradually became stronger. In Ukraine, the legal framework for prosecuting virtually any "verbal" manifestations of hatred is weak and extremely rarely used (see below for changes in Ukrainian legislation in 2021-2022).

Despite the different political contexts, the patterns of antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine have until recently been similar - especially when compared to the situation in Western Europe or the United States. However, the dynamics of the last three years have made adjustments. Some of the specific characteristics of post-Soviet antisemitism that were documented on the basis of data from previous periods have continued, while others, on the contrary, now seem irrelevant. The most interesting thing is that the **rethinking of the image of Jews and Israel is taking place in Russia and Ukraine in the context of a full-scale armed conflict, which radically changes the optics.**

¹⁹ See, for example: How Russia speculates on the rights of menshinas to discredit Ukraine in the UN Radbizi, and where are the alarm bells// *ZMINA*. 24 through 2021. <https://zmina.info/articles/yak-rosiya-spekulyuyeye-na-pravah-menshyn-dlya-dyskredytacziyi-ukrayiny-v-radbezi-oon-i-de-tut-tryvozhni-dzvinochky/> The event organized by Russia at the UN two months before the full-scale invasion was blatantly designed to legitimize the aggression.

²⁰ See for example: On manifestations of antisemitism in Ukraine. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 06.05.2022. https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1812039/

²¹ For an infographic clearly illustrating the dynamics of the number of recorded anti-Semitic crimes, see, for example: Last year in Ukraine did not record a single anti-Semitic attack - expert//*ZMINA*. 14 лютого 2019. https://zmina.info/news/minulogo_roku_v_ukrajini_ne_zafiksuvali_zhodnogo_antisemitskogo_napadu__jeksper_t/

²² For example, as a characteristic illustration of "Ukrainian antisemitism" is often the fact that the traditional Christmas genre of amateur theatrical productions (creches) uses as one of the standard characters "Zhid", whose image is based on the exploitation of negative stereotypes.

In this situation, the two warring countries display opposing tendencies, which will be further discussed in detail based on factual material.

3. Antisemitic incidents during 2022-2024: description and dynamics

The full-scale war divorced the trajectories of antisemitism in the two opposing countries, previously largely determined by the common legacy of the Soviet era and similar post-Soviet social processes.

In Ukraine, the Russian invasion accelerated the trends that had already emerged in previous years, which meant a further decline in antisemitism, only sharper than previously observed.

In Russia, on the other hand, the new situation contributed to the fact that the Judeophobic sentiments previously hidden under the stale crust of repressive and bureaucratic officialdom began to clearly break through. For reasons discussed in more detail below, the sharp change in official discourse was first associated with the full-scale aggression against Ukraine, and then October 7 served as an additional trigger. This has more to do with public rhetoric than with anti-Semitic crimes, which are particularly quantifiable. It is true that incidents on such a scale as the pogrom at Makhachkala airport are difficult to compare with the manifestations of antisemitism recorded earlier. In addition, radical Islamist anti-Semitic terrorism, a phenomenon new to the European part of the post-Soviet space, made itself evident during the reporting period.

3.1.

The general dynamics of the situation in the pre-war period was characterized by a gradual decrease in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. Whereas in 2009 in Russia, there were 8 cases of physical violence motivated by antisemitism and 57 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism²³, already in 2010, there were 3 cases of violence and 14 cases of vandalism, in 2011 4 cases of violence and 9 cases of vandalism²⁴, in 2015 1 case of violence and 11 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism²⁵. During 2018 - 2020, the number of anti-Semitic vandalism cases decreased to 2-4 per year, anti-Semitic violence was either not recorded at all or recorded one case per year²⁶. Quite within this trend, in 2021, according to our information, one anti-Semitic assault and three cases of anti-Semitic vandalism were recorded.

In 2022, no cases of anti-Semitic violence were recorded in Russia; 5 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism were recorded. It should be noted that the number of acts of anti-Semitic vandalism increased slightly in absolute numbers, but still noticeable compared to the previous year, 2021.

In 2023, the situation became more complicated: there was a qualitative change in the forms of manifestations of antisemitism, which made the counting of incidents, which had helped characterize the dynamics earlier, of little relevance. Anti-Semitic public actions, which in the republics of the North Caucasus turned into mass riots, were a significant factor in destabilizing the situation in the country as a whole.

In 2024, the most serious manifestations of antisemitism took the form of terrorist attacks.

²³ Antisemitism in Russia, 2009 - 2010// *Eurasia Jews*. <http://www.jewseurasia.org/page486>

²⁴ Antisemitism in Russia, 2012: Report// *Eurasia Jews*. <http://jewseurasia.org/page668>

²⁵ Antisemitism in Russia and CIS countries in 2015. Report of the Expert Group of the Jewish Community of Russia on the problems of antisemitism. Author's archive.

²⁶ According to the REC and the Sova Center, See, for example: Antisemitism in Russia: the results of 2019 // *Jewish Panorama*, No. 5 (71), May 2020. <https://evrejskaja-panorama.de/article.2020-05.antisemitizm-v-rossii-itogi-2019-g.html>

Description of incidents

- On the night of January 26, 2022, a swastika was scratched near the entrance to the synagogue on Oktyabrskaya Street in Kaliningrad. The suspect in this act of vandalism, a 25-year-old young man, was detained²⁷.

On May 9, 2022, a monument to World War II prisoners of war who died in harsh conditions in Camp No. 199 in Novosibirsk was desecrated. The monument installed in a cemetery in the city's Pervomaisky district was painted over with red paint. A Magen David was drawn on the memorial slab and the words "Nazi" and "enemy" were written²⁸. Since the damaged object is not related to the Jewish community, it is not counted in the overall statistics of anti-Semitic incidents, according to the methodology adopted in this report.

- In May 2022, a swastika and the inscription "Jude" appeared on one of the tombstones in the columbarium of Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow

- On the night of June 11, 2022, in Kaliningrad, unknown vandals broke windows in a small prayer pavilion (ohel) built over the grave of the 19th century Jewish religious authority Israel Salanter at the old Jewish cemetery on Litovsky Vala. Vandals probably tried to get into the building²⁹

- On June 18, 2022, in Rzhev (Tver region), a local resident smashed a magen david placed on the monument to Jewish ghetto prisoners at the city's Memorial Cemetery³⁰.

- On the night of August 16, 2022, a window on the first floor of the Moscow Choral Synagogue building in Spasoglinishchevsky Lane was broken. An unknown vandal left the inscription "*No more strength*" on the wall nearby. The day before the vandalism, a letter with anti-Semitic content was sent to the address of the synagogue³¹.

- In June 2023, the FSB reported that the arson attack on the Choral Synagogue in Perm had been prevented. According to the investigation, the crime was prepared by Maxim Aramilev, a part-time student of the Moscow Financial-Industrial University born in 2003, who holds nationalist views. In addition to the synagogue, the arrested young man allegedly "to intimidate the population and destabilize the socio-political situation in Russia" was also going to set fire to the office of the regional committee of the Communist Party³². Back in the fall of 2022, the student allegedly made a cache in which he hid canisters of gasoline and oil, empty glass bottles, and rags for making Molotov cocktails.

However, according to Nikita Goldin, an 18-year-old acquaintance of Maxim Aramilev, who was a witness in the case but managed to leave for fear of being charged, a somewhat different picture

²⁷ In Kaliningrad, a drunken 25-year-old bartender scratched a swastika at the entrance to the synagogue (video)// *Klops*. 14.02.2022. <https://klops.ru/news/2022-02-14/247826-v-kaliningrade-pyanyy-25-letniy-barmen-natsarapal-svastiku-u-vhoda-v-sinagogu-video>

²⁸ In *Novosibirsk* they desecrated a monument to prisoners of war from Hungary and Latvia// *Sibir. Realii*. May 9, 2022. <https://www.sibreal.org/a/v-novosibirsk-oskvernili-pamyatnik-voennoplennym-iz-vengrii-i-latvii/31841660.html>

²⁹ Vandals smashed windows in the building built over Salanter's grave// *Lechaim*. June 13, 2022. <https://lechaim.ru/news/vandaly-vybili-stekla-v-zdani-ostroennom-nad-mogiloy-salantera>

³⁰ *Evgeny Odintsov*. In the Tver region a man damaged a monument to Jewish prisoners of the ghetto by breaking the Star of David// *Gazeta.ru*. June 21, 2022. <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2022/06/21/17979134.shtml>

³¹ *Valentin Lazarev*. "No more strength": an anti-Semite broke the window of the Moscow Choral Synagogue// *Ridus.ru*. August 17, 2022.

<https://www.ridus.ru/bolshe-net-sil--antisemit-razbil-okno-moskovskoj-horalnoj-sinagogi-387411.html>

³² A student was preparing an arson attack on the Central Synagogue and the CPRF regional committee in Perm// *RBC*. June 30, 2023 <https://perm.rbc.ru/perm/freenews/649ecdca9a79473e3d173ef4>

emerges. The young men were not Russian nationalists - on the contrary, they belonged to a marginal circle of sympathizers of the movement for the autonomy or self-determination of the peoples of the Russian north, the Karelians. of the peoples of the Russian north, the Karelians and the Komi. They also condemned aggression against Ukraine. In the fall of 2022, with the beginning of the partial mobilization campaign, the young men discussed the idea of setting fire to the military enlistment office. Judging by Nikita Goldin's account, the case materials were largely falsified. "We will find everything we want from you: a swastika, a bomb, and a machine gun with a machine gun," according to the young man's words, FSB investigators frightened him and forced him to shout "Glory to Russia!" on camera³³.

After the Hamas terrorist attack of October 7, 2023, and the start of the IDF operation, there was an outbreak of anti-Semitic demonstrations, mainly in the Muslim republics of the North Caucasus of Russia. The immediate cause of the mass actions (see below for more details) was the rumors about the evacuation of refugees from Israel to Russia, which were spreading in Telegram channels. Against the background of the aggravation of general Muslim religious solidarity with the Palestinians and the encouragement of anti-Israeli sentiments by the authorities, these manifestations were not limited to mass demonstrations (see below), but in some cases took the form of outright criminal incidents

- On October 27, 2023, an arson attack occurred at a Jewish community center under construction in Kabardino-Balkaria. The perpetrators threw torched car tires inside the building. The inscription "death to yahudam" was left on the wall³⁴, i.e. to Jews, according to the accepted Muslim religious terminology in Russian transcription.
- On October 29, 2023, there was a pogrom at Makhachkala International Airport (Utash) in the Republic of Dagestan. The aggressive mob that broke into the territory and the airport building itself was looking for Jews (often called "yahuds" by the pogromists) who had arrived on a Tel Aviv-Makhachkala flight of the Russian airline Red Winds. The airport was popular as a transfer point after the number of direct flights to Moscow was reduced. According to the materials of the criminal case on mass riots, 20 people were injured as a result of the actions of the aggressive crowd.

Judging by numerous video recordings, law enforcement officers did not show any resolve in their attempt to stop the aggressive anti-Semites. "The inaction of law enforcement officers and the paralysis of the state apparatus were striking, especially in the first hours of the incidents," writes Tatiana Stanovaya, one of the leading experts on modern Russian state institutions³⁵. The passive or even condoning reaction of the authorities clearly did not correspond to the scale of the incident³⁶. The head of the Republic of Dagestan, Sergei Melikov, called the pogrom in his telegram channel a

³³ *Yevgenia Tamarchenko*. "Forced with tears in their eyes to shout "Glory to Russia!". How the FSB persecutes the activists of Karelia, speaking for the independence of the republic// *Votak*. 02.12.2023. <https://vot-tak.tv/81974788/fsb-presleduet-karelo-aktivistov>; "Forced to shout "Glory to Russia" on camera". Left after interrogations by the FSB// *Sever. Realii*. November 7, 2023. <https://www.severreal.org/a/zastavili-krichat-slava-rossii-na-kameru-uehal-posle-doprosov-fsb/32674232.html>

³⁴ They liquidated a fire in an unfinished building// *EMERCOM of Kabardino-Balkaria*. Oct. 29, 2023. t.me/mchskbr/3044; In Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) a Jewish cultural center was set on fire// *BAZA*. Oct. 29, 2023. t.

³⁵ *Tatiana Stanovaya*. "Misunderstanding" in Makhachkala. Why the authorities do not react to pogroms in the Caucasus// *Carnegie Politika*. October 30, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2023/10/why-the-russian-authorities-failed-to-stop-pogroms-in-the-caucasus>

³⁶ See, for example: Russia: Inappropriate Response to Acts of Antisemitism in the North Caucasus// *Human Rights Watch*. November 13, 2023. <https://www.hrw.org/ru/news/2023/11/13/russia-inadequate-response-antisemitism-north-caucasus>

"misunderstanding" that was the result of "ill-considered actions"³⁷. In the next post he somewhat toughened his rhetoric and characterized them as a "gross violation of the law", but did not fail to add that "all Dagestanis empathize with the suffering of the victims of the actions of unjust people and politicians [from the context it is obvious that this refers to Israel - V.L.] and pray for peace in Palestine"³⁸.

Up to 1,500 people took part in the blockade and occupation of the airport. Later, according to the head of the Russian Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, more than 400 rioters were identified from video recordings³⁹. According to the head of Dagestan's Interior Ministry, Abdurashid Magomedov, more than 1,200 people were brought to administrative responsibility⁴⁰. 140 people are on criminal charges for the riots.

In August 2024, different courts in the Stavropol and Krasnodar regions began passing sentences in this case. According to the standard text of the judgment, "the defendants, while on the territory of Makhachkala International Airport, guided by motives of national and religious hatred and enmity, took part in mass riots". At the time of writing, 21 participants in the pogrom had been sentenced to prison terms ranging from six to nine years in a general regime colony⁴¹.

In 2024, the most radical anti-Semitic manifestations in Russia took the form of terrorism.

Terrorism

On March 7, 2024, immediately after the information was made public about the warning of a number of Western intelligence agencies about a terrorist act being prepared in Moscow (as it became clear later, it was most likely a bloody attack in the Crocus concert complex), the FSB reported the liquidation of a cell of the Islamic State's Wilayat Khorasan in the Kaluga region. According to the report, the Islamists, who were killed when detained, were allegedly planning a gun attack on worshippers during prayers at a Moscow synagogue in Otradnoye⁴².

On April 11, 2024, the FSB reported the foiling of another planned terrorist attack on the same synagogue in Moscow. The suspect, a native of a Central Asian country born in 2002, was killed

³⁷ Dear *Dagestanis!* October 29, 2023. <https://t.me/melikov05/1540>

³⁸ The actions of those who gathered at *Makhachkala* airport today are a gross violation of the law! October 29, 2023. <https://t.me/melikov05/1541>

³⁹ Alexander Bastrykin: How the assassination attempts on Prilepin and Tatarsky were uncovered and Blinovskaya was exposed// *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. October 18, 2024. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27648/4999196/>

⁴⁰ Six defendants in the case of the pogrom at Makhachkala airport were sentenced to terms from seven to eight years in colony// *Present time*. December 16, 2024. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/rossiya-mahachkala-aeroport-figuranty/33241660.html>

⁴¹ Participants of the riots at Makhachkala airport received the first sentence// *RIA Novosti*. August 23, 2024. <https://ria.ru/20240823/besporiyadki-1968004185.html>; Seven defendants in the case of pogroms at Makhachkala airport were sentenced to real terms// *Present Time*. December 11, 2024. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/semeryh-uchastnikov-pogromov-v-aeroportu-mahachkaly-prigovorili-k-realnym-srokam/33235846.html>; Three defendants in the case of the pogrom at Makhachkala airport were sentenced to eight years in prison// *Present time*. December 12, 2024. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/troih-figurantov-dela-o-pogrome-v-mahachkale-prigovorili-k-8-godam/33237202.html>; In Krasnodar region six more participants of mass riots at the international airport "Makhachkala"// *United press service of Krasnodar region courts*. Dec 16, 2024. <https://t.me/opskuban/1069>.

⁴² *Evgeny Belousov*. The FSB has prevented an Islamist terrorist attack in a Moscow synagogue// *Kommersant*, 07.03.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6560515>

during arrest. He had previously served his sentence in a Russian colony. An improvised explosive device and explosives were allegedly found in his apartment (the video shows some kind of plastic bottle and a coil of wire allegedly found under his mattress)⁴³.

Given all the circumstances, it is difficult to assess the degree of reliability of the FSB information in these cases, but it cannot be ruled out that to some extent it correlates with reality.

- On June 23, 2024, terrorist attacks of a largely anti-Semitic nature occurred in two Dagestani cities. In Derbent, terrorists attacked the Kele-Numaz synagogue on Tagi-Zade Street forty minutes before evening prayer. The prayer building had been under constant guard since the unrest in the fall of 2023. The attackers killed two employees of a private security company and opened fire on a police car, injuring one policeman. The attackers then set fire to the building with Molotov cocktails and ambushed police officers on their way to the scene.

On the wall of the synagogue, the terrorists left numbers referring to two specific verses from the Quran (in the accepted citation system, the first number refers to the number of the surah, the second to the ayat) - "2:120" ("The Jews and Christians will not be satisfied with you until you adhere to their religion") and "8:39" ("Fight them until the temptation disappears and the religion is completely devoted to Allah")⁴⁴.

Almost simultaneously, a synagogue on Yermoshkin Street in Makhachkala was attacked. No one was there at the time; the building was closed. The terrorists set fire to the building with a Molotov cocktail and left the inscription "2:120."

A total of twenty-two people died that day at the hands of terrorists who also attacked Christian churches and a post of the State Road Safety Inspectorate, including an Orthodox priest in Derbent who had his throat slit⁴⁵. According to the investigation, the organized group, "united on the grounds of national and religious hatred towards citizens of Israel," included 11 people (there are doubts about the involvement of at least three of the accused, whose case is currently being heard in the Basmany Court of Moscow). All five direct participants in the attacks were killed in shootouts on the day of the attack.

It was alleged that one of those involved in the attack had also taken part in the pogrom at Makhachkala airport⁴⁶.

Characteristically, in this case, no foreign connections or contacts were found in the terrorists⁴⁷.

⁴³ Evgeny Belousov. FSB reported the prevention of a terrorist attack in a synagogue in Moscow// *Kommersant*, 11.04.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6636973>

⁴⁴ Alexander Chernykh. "If they wanted to scare us, we will not be scared"// *Kommersant*. 26.06.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6790808>

⁴⁵ Orthodox churches and synagogues have been attacked in Dagestan. What is known// *BBC News. Russian service*. June 23, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/cw0004198yjo>; Yulia Rybina, Pavel Korobov. Nothing sacred// *Kommersant*. 23.06.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6789164>; Yulia Rybina. Non-poor people// *Kommersant*. 24.06.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6789931>; Maria Lokotetskaya. Brothers for terror// *Kommersant*. 01.12.2024. www.kommersant.ru/doc/6789931

⁴⁶ Yulia Rybina. Melikov: one of the terrorists was a participant in the airport riots// *Kommersant*. 01.07.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6804883>

⁴⁷ A few months later, in Yekaterinburg, the Central District Military Court sentenced a Chelyabinsk resident to six years in prison for an online comment under a news report about an attack on a synagogue, which was qualified as

3.2 Ukraine

According to the information we collected, in 2022 there were five cases of anti-Semitic vandalism in Ukraine⁴⁸ ; in 2023 - three cases, in 2024 - three cases. One case was encountered in the beginning of 2025.

Description of

- On January 19, 2022, a monument to Holocaust victims was destroyed in Lysychansk (Luhansk region)⁴⁹
- On January 28, 2022, a monument to Holocaust victims located near Gagarin Park in Dnipro was desecrated⁵⁰
- On May 16, 2022 in Khmelnytskyi, an unknown vandal drew a sign resembling a swastika and wrote swear words on the rollers at the entrance to the Jewish community center "Thiya" (the building of the historic synagogue of craftsmen)⁵¹ . The identity of the vandal was established, and on September 20, 2022 he was found guilty, according to the text of the verdict, of "degrading the dignity and offending the religious feelings of believers in the teachings of Judaism," and sentenced to one year in prison (suspended)⁵².
- On October 4, 2022, a Magen David was torn from the metal fence at the old Jewish cemetery in Ivano-Frankivsk. Vandals also damaged the fence around the memorial plaque and outlined the metal structure with red paint. Suspects in the offense were identified - three young men and two girls⁵³.
- On December 12, 2022, a window in a synagogue in Kropivnitsky was broken⁵⁴.

On the night of December 24, 2022 in Uzhgorod (Transcarpathian region), large inscriptions "Death to the Jews", "The Jews are killing us" and "Kill the Jews" were spray-painted on Teatralnaya Square in the city center using a spray can. Although Jewish sites were not directly affected and this incident is not included in the final statistics of anti-Semitic vandalism, it should be noted that in the immediate vicinity of the square is the former building of the synagogue (now the regional philharmonic society), which is perceived in the city as a Jewish site.

"justification of terrorism. (Chelyabinsk resident sentenced to six years in prison for justifying terrorist attacks in Dagestan// *Kommersant*, December 9, 2024.

⁴⁸ For ease of comparison with previous periods, which would allow a better understanding of the dynamics, quantitative indicators are taken from the beginning of calendar year 2022.

⁴⁹ Vandals vandalized the memorial sign to the victims of the Holocaust in Lysychansk// *UNIAN*. 19.01.2022 <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3387783-u-lisicansku-vandali-zrujnuvali-pamatnij-znak-zertvam-golokostu.html>

⁵⁰ *Olena Demchenko*. In Dnipro, vandals threw paint on the monument to Holocaust victims (Photo)// *Dniprovskaya Panorama*, 28.01.2022 <https://dnpr.com.ua/ua/post/v-dnepre-vandaly-oblily-kraskoj-pamyatnik-zhertvam-holokosta-foto>

⁵¹ *Olena Kosharska*. Khmelnytskyi man painted a swastika on the synagogue building. He was tried// *Vsim.ua - Khmelnytsky*. 27 veresnya 2022. <https://vsim.ua/Kryminal/hmelnichanin-namalyuvali-svastiku-na-budivli-sinagogi-yogo-sudili-11683069.html>

⁵² *Khmelnytsky Municipal Court of Khmelnytsky Region*. Case No. 686/13428/22. Virok// *Edyniy urovnyi state register of court decisions*. 20 veresnya 2022. <https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/106372848>

⁵³ Vandals vandalized the fence at the Jewish Zvintar in Ivano-Frankivsk// *ZAXID.NET*. 4 zhovtnya 2022. https://zaxid.net/na_yevreyskomu_tsvintari_v_ivano_frankivsku_vandali_poshkodili_ogorozhu_n1550655

⁵⁴ This night the window of the synagogue in Kropivnitsky was broken // *Official channel of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine - the largest all-Ukrainian Jewish organization*. Dec.12, 2022. <https://t.me/UJCUkraine/551>

The identity of the author of the graffiti was established. It turned out that he also mailed a whole anti-Semitic tract of his own composition to the rabbi of Uzhgorod⁵⁵. On November 11, 2024, the anti-Semite was sentenced to two years of suspended imprisonment⁵⁶.

- On August 23, 2023, a memorial to Holocaust victims was desecrated on the outskirts of the town of Radomyshl, Zhytomyr region. Several objects were covered with red paint with anti-Semitic inscriptions and Nazi symbols⁵⁷. The suspect in the commission of this crime was detained. He turned out to be a local 15-year-old teenager who had been linked through social media to a neo-Nazi youth group⁵⁸.

- On October 26, 2023 in Nikolaev, red paint was poured on the synagogue building⁵⁹. Perhaps this is the only manifestation of antisemitism that can be interpreted as a reaction to Operation Steel Swords (perhaps the paint could symbolize the blood that was spilled in Gaza).

- On December 13, 2023 in Kremenchug (Poltava region), an intoxicated man born in 1986 in the company of two drinking buddies passed by a menorah (ritual lamp) installed on the occasion of Hanukkah in Independence Square and knocked it over⁶⁰.

In Kiev, on December 19, 2023, there was also an attempt to desecrate a menorah hankoo on the central street Khreshchatyk⁶¹, however, since the light fixture was not damaged, this incident is not counted as an act of vandalism⁶².

- On January 28, 2024, a memorial plaque erected in memory of Holocaust victims in the tract "Papirnia" in the Sosnovka territorial community of Rivne region was smashed⁶³. A video of the act of vandalism was posted on one of the far-right telegram channels, which allowed law enforcement

⁵⁵ Maxim Zhuravel. In Transcarpathia detained Russian agent-antisemite: called for the extermination of Jews *TSN*. 3.04.2023. <https://tsn.ua/ato/na-zakarpati-zatrimali-rosiyskogo-agenta-antisemita-zaklikav-do-znischennya-yevreyiv-foto-2299768.html>

⁵⁶ Andriy Mickiewicz. The Uzhgorod resident has been punished for anti-Semitic writings and threats to the leader of the Jewish community// *ZAXID.net*. 28 listopada 2024. https://zaxid.net/uzhgorodets_unik_pokarannya_za_antisemitski_napisi_ta_pogrozi_lideru_yevreyskoyi_gromadi_n1598745

⁵⁷ Group for monitoring the rights of national menshinas. 2 veresnya 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/KnguUa/posts/pfbid037Hi9rZGKEeNPpTiDmdSzAkoevVffuC3jf2dTfk3zmzHm58TWY25msgHQHE4vZGxl>

⁵⁸ The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has found rf special services recruiting Ukrainian children for anti-Semitic provocations in different regions of Ukraine// *Security Service of Ukraine*. 25 zhovten 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/SecurSerUkraine/posts/pfbid0KEDKitCT3uqKXeXhi9sYcQJatJzDkz2sCP2jX1s57E24fgSvdn8Vb93JwcYZFigNl>

⁵⁹ Act of vandalism: Synagogue in Mykolayiv was covered with black farboi// *Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine*. 26 zhovtnya 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/fjcuokr/posts/pfbid02R9gJcHabBX1g2Ad5vNZMmEMizGhG6pTsE55WqHNxjUSnsXZ8WSF71rBavGN79mo4l>

⁶⁰ Policemen of Poltava region have identified a person involved in the defacement of a menorah in Kremenchutz// *Head Department of the National Police in Poltava region*. 14 thorough 2023. <https://pl.npu.gov.ua/news/politseiski-poltavshchyny-vstanovyly-osobu-prychetnu-do-poshkodzhennia-menory-u-kremenchutsi>

⁶¹ Law enforcers have detained a man who desecrated a khanukiya in the center of the capital city// *Head Department of the National Police in Kiev*. January 19, 2023. <https://kyiv.npu.gov.ua/news/pravoohorontsi-zatrymaly-cholovika-iakyi-oskvernyv-khanukiiu-u-tsentri-stolytsi>

⁶² Vandalism, according to the monitoring methodology, includes both own physical damage to Jewish infrastructure (synagogues, community centers), tombstones at Jewish cemeteries and Holocaust memorials, such as breaking glass and arson, and graffiti of anti-Semitic and/or neo-Nazi nature on such sites, indicating ideological motivation.

⁶³ Criminal proceedings were opened in Rivne district for desecration and destruction of the monument// *Head Department of the National Police in Rivne region*. 29 sichnia 2024. <https://rv.npu.gov.ua/news/u-rivnenskomu-raioni-za-faktom-oskvernennia-i-ruinuvannia-pamiatnyka-vidkryto-kryminalne-provadhennia>

agencies to get on the trail of the perpetrators. As of the end of 2024, the investigation had not yet been completed.

On November 21, 2024, in Ivano-Frankivsk, a group of young men sprayed graffiti on the wall of the Templ synagogue⁶⁴. The identities of the suspects were subsequently established⁶⁵. Since the ideological nature of the incident is not obvious from the nature of the graffiti, this case is not included in the statistics.

- On December 22, 2024, in Lviv, a marker inscription "I will chew the throat of the Jew" was found on one of the slabs of the memorial "Synagogue Space"⁶⁶.
- On the night of December 31, 2024, an unidentified individual attempted to set fire to a synagogue in Mykolaiv by throwing a Molotov cocktail at its facade. The door and porch were damaged by the fire, but the watchman managed to extinguish the flames before the fire could spread.
- On the evening of January 1, 2025, the last day of Hanukkah, a vandal damaged a festive menorah installed at the "Synagogue Square" memorial in Lviv. A 19-year-old man cut the electric cable, extinguishing the lights on the Hanukkah menorah. He was apprehended the next day.

It is worth noting that this incident occurred amid a heated public debate about the appropriateness of placing Hanukkah menorahs in public spaces. The debate was sparked by a Facebook post from singer Katya Chilly. A significant number of social media users, including public figures, participated in the discussion, which quickly became highly contentious.

Hanukkah menorahs, which symbolize the visible presence of the Jewish community in public spaces, have provoked aggression from antisemites in previous years. The most "record-breaking" year in this regard was the last Hanukkah before the full-scale war: in December 2021, five festive menorahs were vandalized in different cities across Ukraine, from Dnipro to Uzhhorod. However, at that time, incitement in the public sphere came primarily from fringe individuals (mostly those also involved in spreading COVID-19 misinformation and, in some cases, pro-Russian propaganda campaigns).

This time, however, observers were surprised by the scale and intensity of the public debate. Social media should not be taken as a direct indicator of public sentiment, but a cursory analysis suggests that a significant number of accounts that helped make the topic trend on social platforms were likely "fake" accounts created specifically for information campaigns.

Nonetheless, sociological surveys have also recorded negative trends over the past year.

As a working hypothesis, it can be assumed that as Ukraine approaches the end of its third year of war, society is experiencing serious socio-psychological challenges. Persistent stress, emotional exhaustion, and pessimistic expectations about the military-political situation pose a significant challenge to the resilience of Ukrainians. Collective trauma and a sense of vulnerability provoke unhealthy aggressive reactions to even minor irritants.

In light of this, it is reasonable to cautiously express concern that the positive trends of previous years may not be irreversible. It cannot be ruled out that, under a negative scenario—such as the

⁶⁴ Vandals plastered the facade of the synagogue in Ivano-Frankivsk with graffiti// *Official channel of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine - the largest all-Ukrainian Jewish organization*. Nov 22, 2024. <https://t.me/UJCUkraine/696>

⁶⁵ Law enforcers have identified the vandals who plundered a synagogue in Ivano-Frankivsk// *Religion and Information Service of Ukraine*. 28 listopad 2024. https://risu.ua/pravoohoronci-vstanovili-osobi-vandaliv-shcho-rozmalyuvali-sinagogu-v-ivano-frankivsku_n152489

⁶⁶ Own info.

prolonged war or a forced peace settlement on harsh terms for Ukraine—antisemitism could become an outlet for frustration for some Ukrainians.

In this context, it seems particularly important to continue systematic monitoring of the situation to ensure that no developments catch the Jewish community off guard.

In the last three years, there have been no documented cases in which antisemitism was the motive for physical violence. However, a case was documented where a domestic quarrel that started over a car parking complaint was accompanied by anti-Semitic imagery.

- On March 31, 2022, Ihor Perelman, head of the Jewish community, was injured in a fight in Ivano-Frankivsk. He was stabbed three times⁶⁷. According to the victim's testimony, the attacker used insults against Jews. Many sources labeled the attack as anti-Semitic. However, given the context, this is not obvious. The quarrel between the victim and the attacker's wife arose on purely domestic ground (because a car parked by the victim was allegedly in the way of other people; it seems that the car was indeed briefly parked in a bad way because it was loaded with humanitarian aid that had to be unloaded). The attacker, from his point of view, interceded for his wife⁶⁸.

Upon reviewing the available information on anti-Semitic crimes, there is a notable decline in the number of documented incidents compared to previous years, as previously mentioned.

Thus, in 2004 there were 15 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism, 2005 - 13, 2006 - 21, 2007 - 20, 2008 - 13, 2009 - 19, 2010 - 16, 2011, 2012, and 2013 - 9 cases each, 2014. - 23, 2015 - 22, 2016 - 19, 2017 r. - 24 cases, 2018. - 12 cases, 2019 - 14 cases, 2020 - 10 cases. In 2021, 14 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism were documented⁶⁹.

Violent incidents motivated by antisemitism in previous years have resulted in:

- in 2004 - 8 people, 2005 - 13, 2006 - 8, 2007 - 8, 2008 - 5, 2009 - 1, 2010 - 1 person, 2011 no anti-Semitic violence was recorded, 2012 - 4 people (in three incidents), 2013 - 4, 2014 - 4, 2015 - 1, 2016. - also 1 person. In 2017-2019, no incidents of anti-Semitic violence were reported. In 2020, four incidents of anti-Semitic violence were recorded, in 2021 three (during which at least four people were injured).

The information collected by Jewish community structures and human rights public organizations correlates with official data of the National Police of Ukraine. According to the Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko, the National Police will open 18 criminal proceedings regarding antisemitism in Ukraine in 2020, 13 in 2021, and 12 in 2022⁷⁰. It should be clarified that the official statistics include cases related to anti-Semitic hate speech - what in the language of the Ukrainian Criminal Code is called "national or religious enmity or hatred", "humiliation of national honor and dignity or insulting the feelings of citizens in connection with their religious beliefs" (the corpus delicti of crime under Article 161 of the Criminal Code). Most such criminal cases do not reach

⁶⁷ *Roman Guriy*. The director of the Frankish Jewish community was stabbed in the center of the city. The attacker was found// *GALKA.IF.UA*. 30 ber 2022. <https://galka.if.ua/direktor-frankivskoi-ievrejskoi-obshhni-otrimav-nozhovi-poranennya-u-czentri-mista-napadnika-znajshli/>

⁶⁸ *Roman Guriy*. Photos and details of the incident involving the director of the Jewish community of Frankivsk// *GALKA.IF.UA*. 31 ber 2022. <https://galka.if.ua/zyavilisya-foto-i-podrobiczi-incidentu-za-uchasti-direktora-ievrejskoi-gromadi-frankivska/>

⁶⁹ Data from the Vaad of Ukraine and the National Minority Rights Monitoring Group.

⁷⁰ The number of prosecutions for antisemitism in Ukraine has dropped to 12 per year - Minister. *Jewish Confederation of Ukraine*. 18.02.2023. <https://jcu.org.ua/news/kjf-2023-kilkist-provadzhen-za-antisemitizm-v-ukraini-znizilas-do-12-za-rik-ministr>

court. However, it is indicative that the official statistics reflects the same trend, which was also recorded by the monitoring.

Obviously, the full-scale war led to a sharp decrease in the number of manifestations of antisemitism in Ukraine. The covid-19 pandemic probably also had some impact in the previous two years, but its impact was ambiguous. In any case, a retrospective review of the data for the previous period shows that the trend towards a decrease in the number of manifestations of antisemitism began earlier. Obviously, the covid and especially the war only accelerated the natural long-term processes.

However, Ukrainian society as a whole is also under significant stress in the context of the war. The common challenges that Ukraine is likely to face in the near future could negatively affect the situation with antisemitism as well.

4. Political context; position of the authorities

4.1. Russia

It is no exaggeration to state that during almost three years of full-scale war, antisemitism has become a prominent part of Russian official discourse.

The exploitation of the Jewish origin of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, whose image was almost demonized in official discourse, led to the legitimization of antisemitism in the Russian public space. This occurred in the context of a general radicalization of propaganda rhetoric. The sharpness of expressions and the degree of aggressiveness of statements, both in the oral speeches of the country's top officials and in state propaganda in general, have increased unprecedentedly

It must be said that at first, shortly after his victory in the 2019 presidential election, the ethnic origin of Ukraine's new president was perceived in Moscow more as a positive factor. Along with his origin from an industrial Russian-speaking region and his socialization in a Russian-speaking environment, Vladimir Zelensky's Jewishness gave opponents of the Ukrainian national project, who had little understanding of the social processes of recent years, a reason to see the new president as a natural ally in the fight against the "Banderaites." It was expected that the new Ukrainian leader, who built his election campaign on the contrast with the nationalist bias of the previous president, Petro Poroshenko, would become a more convenient partner for the Kremlin. When these hopes failed to materialize, Vladimir Zelensky's Jewishness was exploited in Russian propaganda using anti-Semitic stereotypes. Not only marginal Russian ethno-nationalists (for whom the imaginary Jewishness of Petro Poroshenko was enough to give free rein to their anti-Semitic fantasy), but also quite mainstream figures began to appeal to such motives.

- Thus, even before the full-scale invasion began, in January 2022, Margarita Simonyan posted a joke in her Telegram channel based on an old "95th Quarter" parody of the movie "300 Spartans"⁷¹. In the post of the editor-in-chief of Russia Today combined a clip in which Zelensky the comic in the satirical image of Tsar Leonid bids farewell to his stereotypical Jewish mother as he leaves for war with photos of Zelensky the president in military uniform. The caption to the post suggested that Margarita Simonyan was mocking the supposedly ridiculous idea of a "Russian attack on Ukraine" (which, as it turned out, was actually exactly one month away). The post also obviously exploited the supposedly comical situation of a Jewish military leader (who, moreover, is frightened by an allegedly made-up false threat). The fact that the anti-Semitic subtext was clear to at least part of the

⁷¹ In Moscow living rooms are laughing at this clip// *Margarita Simonyan*. Jan 26, 2022.
<https://t.me/margaritasimonyan/993>

audience is evident from the retelling of this joke, for example, by the Orthodox-nationalist TV channel Tsargrad⁷².

But, of course, the **obsessive reference to the Jewish origin of the Ukrainian president acquired a special scale in Russian state propaganda after February 24, 2022, with Russian President Vladimir Putin giving public legitimization to this anti-Semitic rhetoric.**

- On June 16, 2022, speaking at an economic forum in St. Petersburg, Vladimir Putin, referring to his "Jewish friends," called Vladimir Zelensky "a disgrace to the Jewish people."⁷³ . "This is not a joke, not irony, do you understand?", the Russian president emphasized the importance of his statement, and went on to speculate about "neo-Nazis" and "Hitler's lastborns" and "put on a pedestal."

- On September 5, 2022, Vladimir Putin revisited the topic, stating, "Western curators have put a man - an ethnic Jew, with Jewish roots, with Jewish ancestry - at the head of modern Ukraine... This makes the whole situation highly disgusting in that an ethnic Jew is covering up the glorification of Nazism and covering up those who led the Holocaust in Ukraine in their time."⁷⁴

There is perhaps no point in detailing the manipulations that the Russian president allows himself to make sure that the messages he broadcasts can be interpreted as anti-Semitic. Suffice it to state that it was **at Putin's instigation that the absurd and blasphemous association of Jewry with "Nazism" became compulsively repeated in Russian propaganda.**

- Many examples can be given. Let us limit ourselves to the most typical one. The very next day, September 6, 2022, one of the main Russian propagandists, Vladimir Solovyov, could not refrain from making anti-Semitic innuendos: "When Jew Blinken comes to visit Jew Zelensky to discuss the actions of de facto Nazi troops against Russia, it speaks volumes⁷⁵."

- In the same context, a resonant statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who said in an interview with Italian television station Mediaset on May 1, 2022, that "Hitler had Jewish blood" and "the most ardent anti-Semites are usually Jews"⁷⁶. This absurd claim, like Vladimir Putin's remarks, was meant to somehow explain the Kremlin's paradoxical accusations of Nazism against the Ukrainian state, which is headed by an ethnic Jew. Instead of apologizing for the minister's explicitly anti-Semitic remarks, the Russian Foreign Ministry on May 3 accused the Israeli government of "supporting the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev." The statement continued to accuse Jews (not only Vladimir Zelensky alone) of "participating in the crimes of the Nazis" and now allegedly "successfully cover up" with their origins (i.e., apparently without doing anything specifically for this purpose, simply by the fact of their Jewishness) "natural neo-Nazis, spiritual and blood heirs of the executioners of their people⁷⁷."

⁷² Zelensky goes to war: how the president of Ukraine became a parody of himself// *Tsargrad*. January 26, 2022. https://tsargrad.tv/news/zelenskij-idjot-na-vojnu-kak-prezident-ukrainy-stal-parodiej-sam-na-sebja_484590

⁷³ Plenary session of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum// *President of Russia*. June 16, 2023. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/71445>

⁷⁴ Putin called it disgusting that ethnic Jew Zelensky is covering up the glorification of Nazism// *TASS*. September 5, 2023. <https://tass.ru/politika/18661771>

⁷⁵ *Michael Carpenter*. *Ongoing Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine*// *United States Mission to the OSCE*. September 21, 2023. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/d/555339.pdf>

⁷⁶ Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V.Lavrov with the Italian TV company "Mediaset", Moscow, May 1, 2022 // *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*. May 1, 2022. https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1811569/

⁷⁷ The Russian Foreign Ministry accused Israel of "supporting the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev"// *Novaya Gazeta-Europe*. May 3, 2022

The classic pattern of using antisemitism in political propaganda is that the mention of an opponent's real or perceived Jewish origins, or some of his or her connections to Jews, should discredit him or her by virtue of the audience's negative attitudes toward Jews. However, in modern Russia, as a result of inflammatory propaganda, the negative attitude towards Ukraine is so clearly dominant that the scheme seems to be starting to work in the opposite direction. It is the Jews who are discredited by the fact that a representative of their people was elected president of Ukraine. In the Russian propaganda narrative, the association with Ukraine now casts a shadow on Jewry rather than the other way around.

- A typical example here is an article by Alexei Pavlov, then Assistant Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, published in October 2022 in the popular weekly *Argumenty i Fakty*. The author claimed that "Those in power in Kiev were the first to turn into militant fanatics whose views are directly opposed to those of normal people. [...] Igor Kolomoisky is a Lubavitch Hasid, a Chabadist, an adherent of the ultra-Orthodox religious movement. The main life principle of the Lubavitch Hasidim is the superiority of the sect's supporters over all nations and peoples. Several other Ukrainian oligarchs also belong to this movement, in particular, Viktor Pinchuk - son-in-law of the second president of Ukraine Kuchma, the author of the book "Ukraine is not Russia"⁷⁸." It seems to follow from the author's logic that the statement that Ukraine and Russia are different countries is possible only as a result of the destructive influence of Jewish "militant fanatics, whose views are directly opposed to the views of normal people."
- The perceived negative association of Jewry with Ukraine sometimes manifests itself in quite grotesque forms. For example, a pig's head in a wig resembling a journalist's hairstyle was thrown under the door of the apartment of Alexei Venediktov, the former editor-in-chief of the Ekho Moskvy radio station, and a sticker with an image of a trident, like the Ukrainian small coat of arms, and the inscription "Judensau" was pasted on the door itself⁷⁹ ["Jewish pig"]⁸⁰.

For a better understanding of the context that allowed the legitimization of antisemitism in public rhetoric, it should be added that the full-scale war in general contributed to the penetration of a "low" style of statements in the speeches of the country's public leadership, including the president. Vladimir Putin has not been a stranger to expressions such as "piss in the toilet" before, as well as to obsessive references to the anal theme (as a typical example, one can recall the "rubber butt" discourse that impressed schoolchildren during conversations with schoolchildren "about the main

<https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2022/05/03/rossiiskii-mid-obvinil-izrail-v-podderzhke-neonatsistskogo-rezhima-v-ukraine-news> Among other things, the passage about "blood heirs of executioners" is noteworthy. Since blood heirs are mentioned along with "spiritual" heirs, it seems that the Russian Foreign Ministry professes the idea that nations are responsible for Nazi crimes (and, based on the text, it is the nations of Ukraine and Latvia; Germany or Germans are not mentioned in the statement), and that this collective responsibility is inherited.

⁷⁸ Alexei Pavlov. What is brewing in the "witches' cauldron". Neo-pagan cults have gained strength in Ukraine // *Argumenty i Fakty*. No. 43, October 26, 2022.

https://aif.ru/society/religion/chto_varyat_v_vedminom_kotle_na_ukraine_nabrali_silu_neoyazycheskie_kulty

⁷⁹ A pig's head was planted at Alexei Venediktov's apartment// *Meduza*. March 24, 2022.

<https://meduza.io/news/2022/03/24/k-kvartire-alekseya-venediktova-podbrosili-svinuyu-golovu>.

⁸⁰ More specifically, the "Jewish sow." Judensau is a common anti-Jewish subject in medieval Europe, including sacred art. See: *Kevin Madigan*. Judensau - in: *Richard S. Levy*, ed. *Antisemitism: a historical encyclopedia of prejudice and persecution*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005. Vol. 1 (A- K). P. 387-388.

thing⁸¹). Against the background of the war, the verbal brutality of the Russian leader rapidly progressed⁸².

- Some of Vladimir Putin's low-brow anti-Semitic remarks should probably be understood in this context, such as, for example, the statement that former RAO UES head Anatoly Chubais "is no longer Anatoly Borisovich, but some kind of Moisha Israelievich" (in the same passage, the Russian president used the colloquialisms "ran away" and "what the hell is this for")⁸³.

- The atmosphere of permissiveness of harsh language is supported by numerous propagandists of the regime. For example, Margarita Simonyan commented on the false information of the Russian security services that the Islamists who committed a terrorist act in the Crocus concert hall in Moscow allegedly acted on the orders of the Ukrainian authorities in the following way: "the organization calling itself the Islamic Vilayat serves, figuratively speaking, the Yahuda pig from Krivoy Rog⁸⁴." On the one hand, the text purports to describe what the terrorists, who are not very sympathetic to the author of the text, could supposedly call the president of Ukraine. On the other hand, this statement is entirely a figment of the author's imagination, who found a way to call Vladimir Zelensky a Jewish pig, but "as if" not in her own name.

- **The most recent example (and, it seems, the culmination so far) in a series of anti-Semitic statements by Vladimir Putin at the time of writing was his December 19, 2024 press conference on the results of the outgoing year. In response to a question about the fate of the "Russian Orthodox Church" in Ukraine, the Russian leader launched into an argument about the character of the Kiev authorities: "These are people without any faith at all, godless people. They are ethnic Jews, but who has seen them in a synagogue? I don't think anyone has seen them in a synagogue. They're kind of not Orthodox, because they don't go to church either. They are certainly not followers of Islam, because they hardly show up in mosques either. They are people without tribe and without family. They do not care about anything that is dear to us and the overwhelming part of the Ukrainian people⁸⁵."**

In this speech, Vladimir Putin managed to articulate in a succinct manner a number of theses referring to a rich anti-Semitic tradition - from the thesis about Jews who are godless and persecutors of the church to a direct appeal to the image of the homeless cosmopolitans of the Stalinist propaganda era⁸⁶. Of course, the claims of the Russian head of state cannot withstand any fact-

⁸¹ *Alya Ponomaryova*. Not a rubber butt. Putin talked to schoolchildren "about the important"// *Radio Liberty*. September 02, 2022. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/ne-rezinovaya-popa-putin-pogovoril-so-shkoljnikami-ovazhnom/32015579.html>

⁸² See *Andrei Pertsev*. The Ruler of the Lower Levels. How Marginalized People Become a Model for Russian Power// *Carnegie Politika*. November 8, 2022. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2022/11/lord-of-the-masses-how-russias-fringe-elements-went-mainstream> The author states: Vladimir Putin "increasingly uses Prigozhin's swaggering style in his public speeches, combining it with kitchen arguments about Anglo-Saxons and the rotten West. The president's plunge into the "grassroots" is becoming a dangerous process. His vocabulary and manner of behavior are being marginalized

⁸³ Putin called Chubais "Moisha Israelievich" who "ran away and is hiding", and wished Volozh "health and a good life in Israel"// *Present Time*. September 12, 2023. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/putin-pozhelal-volozhu-zdorovya/32589210.html>

⁸⁴ For a screenshot of Margarita Simonyan's message, see: <https://www.svoboda.org/a/simonyan-putin-ukraine/32589210.html>

⁸⁵ The results of the year with Vladimir Putin// *President of Russia*. December 19, 2024. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75909>

⁸⁶ Given the broader context of Vladimir Putin's statements and symbolic actions, including his meetings with Russian rabbis or participation in ceremonies such as the lighting of ritual candles, one could argue that the Russian president is averse only to disbelief, and that he has no negative feelings toward Judaism itself, or even sympathizes with it (as actually stated in his collection "In the First Person," which contains his childhood (probably at least partially constructed) memories of his elderly devout Jewish neighbors in the Kremlin). In fact, however, the claim about the destructive role of ethnic Jews "without lineage or tribe" who believe in nothing,

checking: although Vladimir Zelensky, if we are talking about him personally, does distance himself from religious organizations, he has certainly been to a synagogue, a temple, and a mosque, for the last two years the president of Ukraine has participated in iftars (a meal of refreshment during fasting in the holy month of Ramadan), and so on. But the most important thing in Vladimir Putin's narrative is probably the very fundamental picture of a world in which "ethnic Jews" have usurped power in Ukraine. It is unclear, in fact, who else is being referred to, except for Vladimir Zelensky personally, whose autonomy the Russian president has repeatedly denied in the past. Either the Russian president is referring to "Western curators," which is a grotesque anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, or he is talking about some abstract enemies who have seized power in Ukraine. One thing is clear: "they ethnic Jews", and they "do not care about what we and the overwhelming part of the Ukrainian people care about"

The statements of the Russian head of state constitute the above-water part of the iceberg of hate propaganda. The above examples of Margarita Simonyan or Vladimir Solovyov repeating anti-Semitic theses of the president are only isolated illustrations. Without systematic monitoring of the Russian information space monopolized by state propaganda, it is difficult to get a full picture of the extent of the spread of anti-Semitic hate speech. However, even a cursory acquaintance with the content of political talk shows and popular TV channels, especially those devoted to the so-called "special military operation," shows that numerous "political scientists" and "war correspondents" actively use Judeophobia, often in an exaggerated or even more vulgarized form than top propagandists.

Another important area in which Russian dignitaries regularly allow themselves to make statements that can be interpreted as anti-Semitic is **Holocaust relativization**. In essence, **state memory policy is built on the denial of the anti-Jewish character of the Holocaust**. Characteristic is the discussion (although the style of the response may be called more of an altercation) that took place in the pages of the Kommersant newspaper between the Israeli Ambassador to Russia, Simona Galperin, and the Russian Foreign Ministry. Ms. Halperin, in her first interview after her appointment in January 2024, complained that "the International Holocaust Remembrance Day [so capitalized in the publication - V.L.] is not yet an official day in the Russian state calendar"⁸⁷. The Russian Foreign Ministry sharply reprimanded the Israeli diplomat: "recently arrived in Moscow Israeli Ambassador to Russia S. Galperin allowed herself a number of unacceptable and provocative statements about Russia, aimed, among other things, at distorting historical realities"⁸⁸. In particular, the Russian Foreign Ministry felt it necessary to point out to the Ambassador that "the Holocaust was the persecution and mass extermination by the Nazis of representatives of various ethnic and social groups".

- Actually, this is just one of the latest examples of the Russian Foreign Ministry's public use of a narrative that official Moscow has been insisting on at various levels in recent years. The question of the proper interpretation of the Holocaust has already been the subject of disagreement between the Russian and Israeli foreign ministries in 2022, prompting the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Information and Press Department, Maria Zakharova, to write a lengthy article "In

even while expressing sympathy for the Jewish religious tradition, is one of the basic versions of the anti-Semitic worldview. Many conservative authors who declared respect for any traditional religion saw Jews as the source of secularism, the destruction of traditional values and all the negative aspects associated with modernization. For more on this, see: *Vyacheslav Likhachev. Mythologeme about "two Jews" within the framework of right-wing political ideologies of modern Russia// Tirosh. Works on Judaic Studies. Issue IV. M.: 2000, P.279-287.*

⁸⁷ "I strongly believe in open and direct dialog"// *Kommersant*, 04.02.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6492853> (the printed version of the newspaper published the interview on February 5, 2024).

⁸⁸ Commentary of the Russian Foreign Ministry to the interview of the Israeli Ambassador to Russia// *Kommersant*, 05.02.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6493651>

Memory of All Holocaust Victims" published in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, the country's main official publication⁸⁹. The fact that modern Germany pays compensation to Jewish Holocaust survivors, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman considers immoral segregation and a manifestation of the Nazi approach, as, in general, and the very idea of singling out Jews as a separate category of victims. "In our country, we do not divide the victory over fascism or the tragedy of the extermination of people by the Nazis along national lines," Maria Zakharova proudly proclaims, and ruthlessly attacks Israeli Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Brodsky, who allegedly "justifies the neo-Nazi regime."

The denial that the Holocaust was a policy of exterminating the Jews is a natural consequence of the fundamental thesis of the actualized Russian politics of memory, which is that there were no other noteworthy actors in the confrontation between Nazism and the Soviet/Russian people. Within this grand narrative, it was the Soviet people who were supposedly the main object of Nazi hatred. Contemporary Russian historiography is attempting to do to the Holocaust what the Christian church fathers did to Judaism in the early Middle Ages: to appropriate the Jewish historical heritage (the Bible, the prophets, the Jerusalem temple, etc.) and the symbolic capital associated with it. The Jews themselves are denied the right to claim this heritage. In the history of Christianity, this idea is called the "doctrine of substitution" (the Roman Catholic Church rejected it at the Second Vatican Council). Contemporary Russian state ideology claims to accomplish something similar to Holocaust remembrance⁹⁰.

According to Vladimir Putin, and repeated by numerous officials and propagandists, it was the Soviet people that Nazism sought to destroy in the first place (Jews may well have been "complicit in the crimes of the Nazis," according to the May 3, 2022 statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry quoted above), the **Kremlin is engaged in a cultural appropriation of the Holocaust that is blatant in its cynicism.**

This thesis is not only related to the period of World War II, it acquires a timeless character. The sacred duty to destroy Nazism ("denazification") is declared to be the mission of the Russian people. Having pushed antisemitism into the background, the modern Russian interpretation of Nazism declares "Russophobia" to be its main characteristic feature. Accordingly, the opposite is also true: everything that the Kremlin considers "Russophobic" is also "Nazi" by default.

- Thus, attempts by a coalition of Western countries to support Ukraine, which has been subjected to Russian aggression, are interpreted by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as "the West wants to finally solve the Russian question"⁹¹. The examples can be continued ad infinitum - this idea has taken a firm place in Russian propaganda.

The use of increasingly overt elements of antisemitism was a logical consequence of the broader ideological evolution that the Kremlin regime is undergoing in connection with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It is very likely that this trend will continue into the next year, 2025.

⁸⁹ *Maria Zakharova*. In memory of all victims of the Holocaust// *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. 09.07.2023. <https://rg.ru/2023/07/19/pamiati-vseh-zhertv-holokosta.html>

⁹⁰ See about it: *V'yacheslav Likhachov*. Yak Rossiya instrumentalizatsii Holocaust// *Istorichna Pravda*. 14 serpnnya 2023. <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/columns/2023/08/14/163024/>

⁹¹ The West wants to finally solve the "Russian question," Lavrov said// *RIA Novosti*. <https://rutube.ru/video/c7965410d84c95b1640b7d282ca9523b/>

4.2 Ukraine

- As mentioned above, six months before the start of the full-scale Russian aggression in Ukraine, a change in legislation aimed at clarifying and tightening responsibility for manifestations of antisemitism began. The Framework Law of Ukraine "On Preventing and Counteracting Antisemitism in Ukraine"⁹² was adopted in September 2021. Its adoption was welcomed by the majority of Ukrainian Jewish organizations, in particular, the United Jewish Community of Ukraine⁹³ (there was, however, also serious criticism⁹⁴). Among other things, the law officially introduced a definition of antisemitism based on a working definition developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. An important element of this definition was the inclusion of anti-Israeli manifestations within the concept of antisemitism. Later, in the second half of February 2022, amendments to the Criminal Code of Ukraine corresponding to this law were adopted⁹⁵. However, they never entered into force. The law was adopted a few days before the start of the full-scale Russian invasion, which is probably why it was not signed by the president of Ukraine (it seems that, given the dynamics of those days, it was simply forgotten)⁹⁶.
- On July 18, 2024, Ukraine, along with 38 other countries and international organizations, joined the Global Recommendations to Counter Antisemitism proposed by the United States⁹⁷.

5. Attitudes toward Israel before and after October 7, 2023; the impact of anti-Israel sentiment on

5.1. Russia

Attitudes toward Israel have undergone a dramatic change in Russia over the past three years, both in official rhetoric at the state level and in public opinion (though, given the total dominance of state propaganda in the information space, this is not surprising). With a certain degree of simplification, we can say that the Russian elite used to sympathize with Israel, maintain close relations with its leadership, and cooperate in many aspects. Various foreign policy considerations forced the Kremlin to formally maintain a balance that allowed Russia to appear as a neutral and equidistant party in the Middle East conflict. In public sentiment, however, support for Israel dominated. This situation was the result of a combination of factors that we will not analyze in detail, but will confine ourselves to stating.

⁹² The Law of Ukraine Pro Zaboobigannya ta protidiya antisemitizmu v Ukrainy// *Vidomosti Verkhovnyaya Rada of Ukraine*, 2021, No. 51, Art. 419.

⁹³ The report "Antisemitism in Ukraine - 2021"// *Official channel of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine - the largest all-Ukrainian Jewish organization*. Feb 9, 2022. <https://t.me/UJCUkraine/487>

⁹⁴ See, for example: Ban on everything bad// *Jews of Eurasia*. 25.02.2021.

<http://jewseurasia.org/page18/news68110.html>; Vyacheslav Likhachev: The bill "On preventing and counteracting antisemitism in Ukraine" will not work// *Vaad Ukraine*. 08.06.2021. <https://vaadua.org/news/zakonoproekt-o-predotvrashchenii-i-protivodeystvii-antisemitizmu-v-ukraine-rabotat-ne-budet>

⁹⁵ Draft Law on Amendments to Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine to implement the provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention and Counteraction to Antisemitism in Ukraine".

http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=71166

⁹⁶ In fact, much more serious changes to the Criminal Code are required to improve the situation with the qualification of hate crimes and the prosecution of perpetrators. The discussion of various drafts has been dragging on in the expert community for more than a decade; the need to harmonize Ukrainian legislation with European standards has given a second breath to this discussion in the last year.

⁹⁷ Online Press Briefing with the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt// *U.S. Department of State*. July 19, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/online-press-briefing-with-the-special-envoy-to-monitor-and-combat-antisemitism-ambassador-deborah-lipstadt/>

This situation began to change gradually earlier, about ten years ago, against the backdrop of Russia's deteriorating relations with the United States and the rest of the civilized world due to the occupation of Crimea, on the one hand, and increased cooperation with Iran and Middle Eastern terrorist groups, on the other. The full-scale war with Ukraine was the most powerful catalyst for this trend.

To better understand the essence of the changes that have taken place, one should take into account the ideological framework of the global geopolitical confrontation with the West, which supposedly has an existential character for Russia. This idea became obsessive for the Russian leadership, served as a criterion for choosing a line of political behavior, defining friendly and unfriendly (in Russia it is a formalized list) countries, and served as the main justification for the attack on Ukraine. Israel, like Ukraine, is perceived as part of the Western world. If earlier in the Russian perception there were possible halftones, and a combination of various factors could balance the fact of the military-political alliance between the United States and Israel in the eyes of the Russian leadership, then after February 24, the geopolitical dichotomy became categorical.

As recently as five years ago, in 2019, a huge banner showing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shaking hands with Vladimir Putin could have been hung on the headquarters building of Israel's ruling Likud party before the election as an advertisement. In his previous cadence, the Israeli prime minister met the Russian president more often than any other foreign leader and never refused to participate in propaganda activities important to the Kremlin dictator - from participating with a St. George ribbon on his jacket lapel in the "Immortal Regiment" march through Red Square in Moscow⁹⁸ to help organize Vladimir Putin's benefit at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem⁹⁹.

This seems impossible today, but not because of Israel's desire to distance itself after February 24 from the toxic leader of a country that unleashed a war of aggression, but because of Moscow's own decision to distance itself from Israel after October 7. Israel, for its part, tried its best to maintain neutral and favorable relations with Russia, covering itself with various reasons - the presence of the Russian army in Syria, Moscow's ability to influence Tehran, and the need to take care of the interests of Russia's Jewish community. Of course, the personal relationship between Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu, who seemed to understand each other well, also played a role

However, the logic of the geopolitical confrontation initiated by Moscow has made its adjustments. **Israel, which is undoubtedly part of the Western world in the military-political sense, albeit a peculiar one, despite the Jewish leadership's clearly declared neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation, began to be described in increasingly negative tones in state propaganda.** The political rapprochement with Iran, which has become a valuable military-technical ally of Russia, has contributed to this.

After October 7 and the launch of Operation Steel Swords, Russia deliberately chose the strategy of becoming one of the loudest critics of Israel's actions in the world¹⁰⁰. This decision

⁹⁸ See, e.g.: *Alexander Gostev*. "To play along with Putin for his own sake". Why Netanyahu is flying to Moscow again// *Radio Liberty*. February 26, 2019. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29790317.html>

⁹⁹ See, e.g.: *V'yacheslav Likhachov*. "Wars of Remembrance": how Putin spent his benefit in Jerusalem and why he needs to postpone the victory over Japan // *Historic Truth*. October 20, 2020. <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2020/04/20/157366/>

¹⁰⁰ See on this, e.g.: *Milan Cerny*. Hamas is her friend. How a quarrel with Israel can change Russia's position in the Middle East// *Carnegie Politika*. November 28, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia- Eurasia/politika/2023/11/israel-and-russia-the-end-of-a-friendship>

was undoubtedly motivated by the desire to gain dividends in the countries of, as Kremlin propaganda puts it, the "global majority"¹⁰¹."

The heightened sense of Muslim solidarity with the Palestinian people, fueled by anti-Zionist incitement propaganda, which became part of the official Russian information discourse, pushed the radicalized part of society to aggressive actions. Official propaganda created a false sense among aggressive participants in grass-roots movements that the state tolerated or even implicitly encouraged anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic activity. It was in this context that incidents such as the airport pogrom and terrorist attacks described above became possible.

As mentioned above, the most acute form in October 2023 took the form of speeches in the republics of the North Caucasus.

- In Dagestan's Khasavyurt on October 28, 2023, a crowd sought out Israelis at the Kiev and Flamingo hotels. The administration of the latter posted a notice on its doors informing that "foreign citizens of Israel (Jews) are strictly forbidden to enter"¹⁰²."

- **The position of the authorities with regard to public manifestations of antisemitism after October 7 can in some cases be regarded as condoning.** For example, on October 28 in Karachay-Cherkessia, an employee of the administration came out to protesters in front of the government house in Cherkessk who demanded that all Jews be evicted from the republic and, according to a journalist, "tried to explain that the authorities had no legal grounds to evict anyone" and invited representatives of the protesters to come in to discuss their demands¹⁰³. The head of Dagestan has already been quoted above with his mild reaction to the pogrom at Makhachkala airport. **Even more egregious was the awarding by the Russian President of the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland", First Class, to Enrik Muslimov, Minister of National Policy and Religious Affairs of Dagestan, a week and a half after the anti-Semitic riots**¹⁰⁴.

Even in St. Petersburg, for example, there have been cases when cab drivers, seeing elements of clothing on passengers indicating that they belong to Orthodox Judaism, refused to drive them and forced them to get out of the car¹⁰⁵.

Sociological surveys have recorded a dramatic shift in the perception of Israel and public opinion. Over several years, the position of the average Russian respondent has evolved from the conventional position of "Israel is our ally in the fight against the common enemy, Islamist terrorism" to "Israel is an ally of our enemies who want to destroy us.

¹⁰¹ See, for example: *Alexander Baunov*. Overlapping Wars. How Russia will use the aggravation in the Middle East// *Carnegie Politika*. October 16, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2023/10/nalozhenie-vojn-kak-rossiya-vospolzuetsya-obostreniem-na-blizhnem-vostoke>

¹⁰² "They were not allowed to go to their rooms. In a Dagestan hotel told about the attempted "anti-Jewish raid"// *Podyom*. 29.10.2023. <https://pdmnews.ru/33913/>

¹⁰³ *Alexandra Larintseva*. A Jewish center in Nalchik was on fire, and an insulting inscription was left on its walls// *Kommersant*, 29.10.2023. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6310211> A video recording shows an official, after listening to the protesters' demand, asking them to determine who would be in charge in order to talk to him. "We have everyone in charge," the protesters reply to him. See: Residents of KCR gathered for a rally, they demanded the eviction of Jews from their land// *BAZA*. Oct 28, 2023. <https://t.me/bazabazon/22539>

¹⁰⁴ Putin awarded Dagestan's Minister for National Policy a week and a half after the anti-Semitic riots// *Radio Liberty*. November 09, 2023. <https://www.kavkazr.com/a/putin-nagradil-ministra-po-natspolitike-dagestana-cherez-poltory-nedeli-posle-antisemitskih-besporyadkov/32677553.html>

¹⁰⁵ *Andrei Ershov, Valery Gribanov*. "In today's world it is hard to maintain crystal-clear bilateral relations"// *Kommersant*. 01.04.2024. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6608579>

5.2 Ukraine

Ukrainian society is characterized by a completely uncritically positive, almost enthusiastic attitude towards Israel. The Jewish state is seen as an exemplary model of success, despite the existential threat constantly hanging over the country, which Israel is successfully coping with. Moreover, Israel's enemies - Iran and various terrorist groups - are allied with Russia, Ukraine's existential adversary. This alone is enough for Ukrainians to believe that the Jewish state is on the same side of the notional "front line" as they are, even if the Israeli government has consistently avoided participating in any format in providing Ukraine with military-technical support¹⁰⁶.

The Hamas terrorist attack on October 7, 2023, caused a surge of solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people in Ukraine¹⁰⁷. Already in the evening of the same day in Kyiv and other major cities, electronic billboards in public places began to display Israeli flags. On October 11, 2023, mass events (rallies and prayers) in support of the people of Israel were held in Kyiv.

Perhaps the only public manifestation of solidarity with the Palestinian people that turned into anti-Israeli propaganda was a collective letter published in the marginal online publication *Spilne*, known for its left-wing radical stance¹⁰⁸. Materials that can be called anti-Semitic have been published in this context only on very marginal resources, such as the Telegram channel of the Ukrainian branch of the Islamist party Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Conclusion

Over the past three years, the situation with antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine has undergone significant changes. At the same time, it is quite obvious that it is developing in different directions in the two countries. This is all the more noteworthy because previously, despite the armed conflict that has lasted since 2014 and the difference in the political system and public sentiment, the manifestations of antisemitism could largely be characterized by features common to almost the entire post-Soviet space.

In Russia, due to the general logic of propaganda support for the aggression against Ukraine, antisemitism has taken a firm place in the state ideology. In the mass consciousness, there has been a shift in public sentiment regarding the Middle East conflict - Israel has lost the sympathy of most Russians. The most aggressive manifestations of antisemitism, up to and including terrorist acts, are primarily associated with radical Islamist groups.

The number of anti-Semitic incidents in Ukraine has noticeably decreased, and the recorded cases are generally of a less significant nature than previously. The state has strengthened the legislative framework for combating antisemitism, and the detection rate of anti-Semitic crimes has increased. Ukrainian society as a whole feels solidarity with the people of Israel.

However, the common challenges that Ukraine is likely to face in the near future could also negatively impact the situation with antisemitism.

¹⁰⁶ See on this, e.g.: *Vyacheslav Likhachev*. A Disappointing Model. Is Israel Ready to Help Ukraine// *Carnegie. Politika*. November 9, 2022. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2022/11/razocharovavshij-obrazec-gotov-li-izrail-pomogat-ukraine?lang=ru>

¹⁰⁷ See on this, e.g., *Vyacheslav Likhachev*: *Vyacheslav Likhachev*. Wiedererkennungseffekt - Die Wahrnehmung Israels in der Ukraine// *Ukraine verstehen*. 31 Okt. 2023. <https://ukraineverstehen.de/wiedererkennungseffekt-die-wahrnehmung-israels-in-der-ukraine/>

¹⁰⁸ Ukrainian list of solidarity with the Palestinian people// *Spilne*. 02.11.2023. <https://commons.com.ua/uk/ukrayinskij-list-solidarnosti/>