**Antisemitic Violence, Hatred and Discrimination as an Obstacle to the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16)**

**Submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed**

**AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights**

**May 2020**

AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights welcomes the [request](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/CallforSubmissions.pdf) of Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, for information to aid him in preparing a report to the UN General Assembly in 2020 examining the relationship between intolerance and discrimination on the basis of freedom of religion or belief and the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.

In the 2030 Agenda, all Member States pledge to “work tirelessly” to realize SDG 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The UN has developed indicators to assess the achievement of several of the targets associated with SDG 16 (16.1, 16.3,

16.6, and 16.B)[[1]](#endnote-1), including:

* Number of victims of intentional homicide (indicator 16.1.1) and proportion of population subjected to physical or psychological violence (indicator 16.1.3);
* Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone in the area they live (indicator 16.1.4);
* Proportion of population having felt discriminated against or harassed (indicator 16.B.1);
* Proportion of victims of violence who reported it to authorities (indicator 16.3.1); and
* Proportion of the population satisfied with public services (indicator 16.6.2).[[2]](#endnote-2)

In April 2020, JBI published a report, [*Antisemitism: A Persistent Threat to Human Rights*](https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-05/JBI%20Six%20Month%20Review%20of%20Global%20Antisemitism.pdf)*,* surveying incidents that occurred in the six months following Dr. Shaheed’s presentation of a groundbreaking report on the subject of antisemitism to the UN General Assembly, as well as a preliminary assessment of progress made in implementing his recommendations.[[3]](#endnote-3) JBI’s report, and its detailed [Annex](https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-05/JBI%20Annex%20-%20Antisemitic%20Incidents%20related%20to%20COVID.pdf) (attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this submission), demonstrate that persistent global antisemitism remains a serious impediment to the achievement of SDG 16 and its targets.

*Rising incidence of antisemitic violence and harassment (SDG indicators 16.1.1 and 16.1.3)*

As of May 2020, a number of authorities and non-governmental organizations that monitor and report on antisemitism in several key cities and countries have published reports revealing that the marked increase in antisemitic incidents in 2017 and 2018 – which Dr. Shaheed noted with alarm in his previous report to the General Assembly – persisted throughout 2019:

* **Globally**, the Kantor Center at Tel Aviv University and European Jewish Congress documented an 18% increase in violent antisemitic attacks from 2018 to 2019.[[4]](#endnote-4)
* In the **United States**, several major cities documented a rise in antisemitic hate crimes in 2019, with New York City experiencing an estimated 26% increase from 2018 to 2019.[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Police in **Germany** documented a record number of antisemitic hate crimes from in 2019, including a shooting at the Halle synagogue on October 9, representing a 13% increase.[[6]](#endnote-6)
* Monitors documented a 7% increase in antisemitic incidents in the **United Kingdom** and an 8% increase in antisemitic incidents in **Canada** in 2019.[[7]](#endnote-7)

Many of the most serious incidents of antisemitic violence committed in 2019 occurred after Dr. Shaheed presented his report on antisemitism to the UN in October. In the United States, the FBI arrested a man with white supremacist beliefs who had expressed antisemitic hatred on Facebook for plotting to bomb a synagogue in Pueblo, Colorado on November 1,[[8]](#endnote-8) an attack on a kosher supermarket Jews in Jersey City, New Jersey on December 10 resulted in the death of three people and a policeman;[[9]](#endnote-9) and an attack on the home of a rabbi hosting a Hanukkah celebration in Monsey, New York, on December 28 wounded five guests, including one who later died.[[10]](#endnote-10) In December 2019, Orthodox Jewish residents in several Brooklyn, New York neighborhoods experienced an alarming series of apparently antisemitic assaults.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Jews faced physical attacks and threats of violence in other countries as well, including Germany,[[12]](#endnote-12) where a man armed with a gun attacked a synagogue in Halle on October 9, the Jewish High Holy Day of Yom Kippur, and shot nearby individuals when he was unable to enter it, killing two and injuring two.[[13]](#endnote-13) Antisemitic assaults were documented in the last months of 2019 in the United Kingdom,[[14]](#endnote-14) France,[[15]](#endnote-15) and Italy as well.[[16]](#endnote-16) Jewish religious and cultural sites in Denmark,[[17]](#endnote-17) Sweden,[[18]](#endnote-18) and France[[19]](#endnote-19) were also defaced in late 2019.

Moreover, a host of antisemitic incidents have been documented thus far in 2020, many of which were committed by people who associated Jews with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many countries, conspiracy theories claiming that Jews or Israel engineered or are deliberately spreading COVID-19, as well as age-old antisemitic tropes associating Jews with disease, have been spread in traditional media and online, leading not only to instances in which Jewish people, communities, and institutions have been subjected to antisemitic harassment and discrimination, but also to cases in which antisemitic rhetoric seems to have motivated attempted violent attacks against sites and individuals, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

In the United States, for example, individuals have made violent threats against members of Jewish communities in New York and New Jersey on social media platforms;[[20]](#endnote-20) and even committed assaults against members of visibly Jewish communities in New York.[[21]](#endnote-21) In one case, an individual who had posted antisemitic commentary online attempted to carry out a mass-casualty attack on a hospital treating COVID-19 patients in Missouri, [[22]](#endnote-22) and in another, on April 2, 2020, an incendiary device was placed at a Jewish assisted living residence in Massachusetts, after a white supremacist organization suggested on social media that it would be a good target for an attack intended to kill many Jews.[[23]](#endnote-23) Cases have also been reported in which Jewish individuals were discriminated against by employees of private businesses.[[24]](#endnote-24) Further, between March and May 2020, the Tomb of Esther and Mordechai, an important holy Jewish site in Iran, was subjected to an arson attack;[[25]](#endnote-25) a synagogue in Russia was subjected to an arson attack;[[26]](#endnote-26) a Jewish cemetery in Finlandwas defaced with antisemitic graffiti;[[27]](#endnote-27) and a number of Jewish religious sites in the United States were defaced with swastikas and other antisemitic graffiti.[[28]](#endnote-28)

*Antisemitic attacks and rhetoric and lack of confidence in public officials leading to fear among and underreporting of incidents by Jews (SDG indicators 16.1.4, 16.B.1, 16.3.1 and 16.6.2)*

JBI’s [Report](https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-05/JBI%20Six%20Month%20Review%20of%20Global%20Antisemitism.pdf), and its corresponding [Annex](https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-05/JBI%20Annex%20-%20Antisemitic%20Incidents%20related%20to%20COVID.pdf), detail dozens of instances of antisemitic rhetoric proliferating online, and originating in countries around the world, documented in the first months of 2020. Dr. Shaheed was the first UN actor to express alarm about the rise in antisemitic rhetoric during the COVID-19 crisis, in an April 17 press release;[[29]](#endnote-29) subsequently, the UN Secretary-General[[30]](#endnote-30) and the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities[[31]](#endnote-31) did so as well.

As Dr. Shaheed has previously acknowledged, in recent years, rising antisemitism has created a climate of fear among Jews worldwide, leading many to feel unsafe and to refrain from engaging in religious and other practices that would reveal their Jewish identity. As Dr. Shaheed noted in his 2019 report on antisemitism, “members of the Jewish communities in a number of countries have reported that they are increasingly reluctant to display religious attire… or to carry out public discussions in a traditional language…Individuals also report abstaining from identifying publicly as Jews, expressing their cultural identity or attending Jewish religious and cultural events, which effectively excludes Jews from public life. In many places, the threats faced by Jewish communities have compelled them to seek or establish extensive security measures for their places of worship, schools and other religious and cultural sites.”[[32]](#endnote-32)

More recently, as JBI’s recent report notes, online antisemitism is having a particularly negative impact on Jews’ ability to manifest their religion during the COVID-19 era, in which the right to freedom of religion or belief has been restricted around the world. Practices like antisemitic ‘Zoombombing,’ for example, cases of which the JBI report documents in the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom, can cause trauma and dissuade Jews from engaging in the limited avenues that exist today for them to exercise the right to manifest their religion. Similarly, Jews have experienced discrimination in cases where government authorities have proposed or adopted emergency measures in response to the pandemic that violate Jewish religious practices, for example, by requiring the bodies of victims of COVID-19 to be cremated even where this practice is inconsistent with their religious beliefs (such measures were considered or adopted in countries including the U.K.,[[33]](#endnote-33) Romania, [[34]](#endnote-34) and Argentina[[35]](#endnote-35)).

The persistent fear that rising antisemitism and the experience of discrimination and harassment has provoked in Jews, which the European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency,[[36]](#endnote-36) AJC,[[37]](#endnote-37) and others have documented, is a serious impediment to the realization of SDG 16. So too is the persistent underreporting of antisemitic incidents by victims in the U.S. and Europe, which these and other organizations have documented, and which appears to be primarily a consequence of the belief by a significant proportion of Jewish victims of hate crimes that the authorities would not have acted effectively had they complained.[[38]](#endnote-38) This lack of confidence results in part from the enduring problem, which Dr. Shaheed acknowledged, that many countries still do not attempt to effectively and comprehensively monitor antisemitic incidents.[[39]](#endnote-39)

*Recommendations*

The persistence of antisemitism, and its continued proliferation during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that antisemitism remains a serious obstacle to the achievement of SDG 16 and that urgent action is needed to address it.

* **Governments** worldwide should undertake – or enhance their existing efforts – to effectively monitor, document, and take effective action in response to antisemitic hate crimes and discrimination, especially by establishing collaborative arrangements with Jewish communities and civil society organizations to address the persistent challenge of underreporting. They should also ensure that all Jewish places of worship, educational, cultural sites, and individuals requiring protection receive it. All public officials should receive training on how to recognize antisemitism, with reference to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism,[[40]](#endnote-40) which Dr. Shaheed has called on all governments to “adopt…for use in education and awareness-raising and for monitoring manifestations of antisemitism.”[[41]](#endnote-41)
* **During the COVID-19 pandemic**, authorities should establish and maintain effective channels of communication with Jewish communities to transmit information about existing restrictions on public gatherings and social distancing requirements, seek to identify alternative arrangements in which religious activities can be conducted in ways that respect such restrictions, ensure that restrictions are not applied in a discriminatory manner, and regularly review restrictions to ensure that they remain necessary and proportionate;
* **Public officials, religious leaders, and others in a position of influence** should promptly and publicly condemn antisemitic incidents and rhetoric and take other actions to counter it that are consistent with human rights standards;
* **Social media platforms** should adopt terms of service and community standards prohibiting antisemitic speech, in line with the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, strengthen their capacity to identify and promptly remove antisemitic content, and block users that repeatedly post such content. They should also acknowledge the danger of antisemitic stereotyping and conspiracies and similar hate speech and undertake individual and joint efforts to combat it, just as several platforms have already committed to combat misinformation about the coronavirus;
* **United Nations experts and officials** should express concern about the threat to human rights posed by antisemitic hate speech and condemn it, building on Dr. Shaheed’s April 17 warning about antisemitism during the COVID-19 pandemic. All UN personnel should receive training on how to recognize antisemitism, with reference to the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. They should also be instructed to reach out to Jewish communities in the countries in which they work to understand their concerns, consistent with the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action on Hate Speech (2019)[[42]](#endnote-42) and the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights (2020);[[43]](#endnote-43)

* **States at the United Nations** should continue to take actions reflecting multilateral concern about antisemitism and encouraging all governments to combat it in ways that are consistent with their human rights obligations, including by convening discussions about antisemitism at the General Assembly and convening best-practices sharing meetings of the “Istanbul Process” on combating religious intolerance.[[44]](#endnote-44)

1. UN Member States identified several ‘targets’ associated with SDG 16, among them “significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere,” (target 16.1) “promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies…” (target 16.B), “promote the rule of law…and ensure equal access to justice…” (target 16.3), and “develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions,” (target 16.6). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Final list of proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicators, Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1), Annex IV,

   available at:

   <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, U.N. Doc. A/74/358 (Sep. 20, 2019), <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Kantor Center, Tel Aviv University, and European Jewish Congress, Antisemitism Worldwide 2019 and the beginning of 2020: General Analysis – Main Findings (Draft)(April 20, 2020). Available at

   <http://www.kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/Kantor%20Center%20Worldwide%20Antisemitism%20in%202019%20-%20Main%20findings_0.pdf>. The report documents 456 cases of major violent attacks in 2019 compared to 387 in 2018, resulting in the deaths of seven Jews and non-Jews; attacks on 53 synagogues (12%) and 28 community centers and schools (6 percent); a 47% increase in life-endangering threats; and a 24% increase in attacks on private property. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Rob Frehse, *Anti-Semitic hate crimes rise in 2019, overall crime at record low, NYPD says,* CNN (Jan. 7, 2020), <https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/07/us/new-york-crime-stats-anti-semitic-hate-crimes/index.html>. Other cities including Los Angeles and Chicago also reported experiencing rising levels of reported antisemitic hate cimes. Nigel Chiwaya, *It’s not just New York: Anti-Jewish attacks are part of a wave of ‘more violent’ hate crimes,* NBC (Jan. 3, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/anti-semitic-attacks-more-violent-hate-crimes-new-york-n1110036>. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-antisemitsm-crimes/a-53583839>. German authorities recorded 2,032 crimes motivated by antisemitism in 2019, a rise of 13% over 2018, and the highest since those statistics were collected.  [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Harriet Sherwood, *Antisemitic incidents hit new high in 2019, according to study,* The Guardian (Feb. 5, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/feb/06/antisemitic-incidents-hit-new-high-in-2019-according-to-study>; B'nai Brith Canada, Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2019, 5 (2020), <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/bnaibrithcanada/pages/394/attachments/original/1587945855/B'nai_Brith_Canada_Audit_2019_FINAL.pdf?1587945855>. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Julie Turkewitz, *White Supremacist Plotted to Bomb Colorado Synagogue, F.B.I. Says*, New York Times (Nov. 4, 2019). <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/us/pueblo-colorado-synagogue-richard-holzer.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. On December 10, 2019, David N. Anderson and Francine Graham attacked the JC Kosher Supermarket in Jersey City, New Jersey, which resulted in their deaths, as well as the death of three persons inside the store and a Jersey City police officer. Following the incident, it was reported that Anderson had been linked to the Black Hebrew Israelite movement, which consists of many separatist groups, of which 144 have been designated as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. *Deadly Attack in New Jersey – Possible Link to Black Separatist Movement,* Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/deadly-attack-new-jersey-possible-link-black-separatist-movement>. The Mayor of Jersey City reported that Anderson’s Facebook posts expressed “favorable sentiment” towards antisemitic groups. Michael Gold and Ali Watkins, *Suspect in Jersey City Linked to Black Hebrew Israelite Group,* New York Times (Dec. 11, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/11/nyregion/jersey-city-shooting.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. On December 28, 2019, Grafton Thomas invaded the home of Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg and began stabbing guests who were there to celebrate the seventh night of Hanukkah. Rebecca Liebson et al., *Intruder Screamed ‘I’ll Get You’ in Attack on Jews at Rabbi’s Home,* New York Times (Dec. 29, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/29/nyregion/monsey-new-york-stabbing.html>. Five guests were wounded, one of whom ultimately died in March. Azi Paybarah, *Rabbi Dies Three Months After Hanukkah Night Attack,* New York Times (Mar. 30, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/nyregion/rabbi-monsey-attack.html>. It was reported that, following the attack, Thomas also attempted and was prevented from entering a synagogue next door. Rebecca Liebson et al., *5 Wounded in Stabbing at Rabbi’s House in N.Y. Suburb,* New York Times (Dec. 28, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/nyregion/monsey-synagogue-stabbing-anti-semitic.html>. Thomas kept journals which referenced Jews and his internet search history included the question “why did Hitler hate the Jews,” “German Jewish Temples near me”, and “prominent companies founded by Jews in America. *Monsey stabbing: Journals of attacker ‘referenced Jews’,* BBC News (Dec. 30, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50952441>. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Shayna Jacobs, *Acts of anti-Semitism are on the rise in New York and elsewhere, leaving Jewish community rattled,* Washington Post (Dec. 29, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/acts-of-anti-semitism-are-on-the-rise-in-new-york-and-elsewhere-leaving-jewish-community-rattled/2019/12/29/f8c20578-2a7e-11ea-bcb3-ac6482c4a92f_story.html>; Andrea Salcedo and Sean Piccoli, *N.Y.P.D. Steps Up Patrols After Reports of 8 Anti-Semitic Incidents,* New York Times (Dec. 27, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/nyregion/brooklyn-anti-semitic-attack.html>; *13 and Counting: NYPD Probing New Year’s Day Attack on Young Jewish Man in Williamsburg,* CBS New York (Jan. 1, 2020),

    <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/01/01/brooklyn-anti-semitic-hate-crimes-jewish-men-attacked-williamsburg-crown-heights/>; Ari Feldman, *Six Nights of Hanukkah, Seven Anti-Semitic Incidents in New York City,* The Forward (Dec. 27, 2019), <https://forward.com/news/national/437346/anti-semitic-attacks-nyc-brooklyn/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. On October 28, a 70 year old Jewish man was verbally attacked and physically assaulted by a man using antisemitic insults in the Pankow district in Berlin, Germany. Benjamin Weinthal, *70-year-old Jewish man in Berlin assaulted in violent antisemitic attack,* The Jerusalem Post (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/70-year-old-jewish-man-in-berlin-assaulted-in-violent-antisemitic-attack-606262>. On November 18, a 76 year old man was assaulted by a teenager in the same neighborhood who called him a Jew during the attack. Toby Axelrod, *Elderly man beaten by teen in anti-Semitic attack in Berlin, police say,* The Times of Israel (Nov. 20, 2019), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/elderly-man-beaten-by-teen-in-anti-semitic-attack-in-berlin-police-say/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. After failing to enter the synagogue, Stephan Balliet, 27, armed with a sub-machine gun and explosives, killed two civilians nearby and injured two others. Balliet live-streamed the attack on the gaming website Twitch, during which he said that Jews were the cause of the world’s problems. In his manifesto, he stated, “Kill as many anti-Whites as possible, Jews preferred.” Rick Noack, Luisa Beck and Loveday Morris, *Gunman live-streamed attack outside German synagogue that left two dead*, The Washington Post (Oct. 9, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/shooting-near-synagogue-in-germany-leaves-at-least-two-people-dead-police-say/2019/10/09/08214514-ea89-11e9-9306-47cb0324fd44_story.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. On December 29, a rabbi who was visiting London was physically assaulted by teenagers while walking through the Stamford Hill neighborhood. The two teens reportedly shouted “Kill Jews” and “F\*\*\* Jews” during the attack. Rosa Doherty, *Senior Rabbi ‘beaten up in totally unprovoked attack’ in Stamford Hill,* The Jewish Chronicle (Dec. 1, 2019), <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/senior-rabbi-attacked-in-stamford-hill-1.493749>. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. JTA and Marcy Oster, *Israeli Student Beaton on Paris Metro Train After He Was Heard Speaking Hebrew,* Haaretz (Dec. 10, 2019), <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/israeli-student-beaten-on-paris-metro-train-after-he-was-heard-speaking-hebrew-1.8255281>. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. *Italy Holocaust survivor Liliana Serge under guard amid death threats,* BBC (Nov. 7, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50329597>. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. On November 13, two men, including Jacob Vullum Andersen, a leader of the neo-Nazi group the Nordic Resistance Movement, were arrested for the cemetery vandalism and charged with gross vandalism and a hate crime offence. *Neo-Nazi held in Denmark over Jewish cemetery attack,* BBC (Nov. 14, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50417187>. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Cnaan Liphshiz, *On Kristallnacht anniversary, yellow stars placed at Jewish sites in Scandinavia,* The Times of Israel (Nov. 11, 2019), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/on-kristallnacht-anniversary-yellow-stars-appear-on-jewish-sites-in-scandinavia/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. *France Creates Anti-hate Crime Office Amid anti-Semitic Wave,* Haaretz (Dec. 4, 2019), <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/france-creates-anti-hate-crime-office-amid-anti-semitic-wave-1.8223020>. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Dan Alexander, *Man Arrested over Facebook Threat Against Jews in Lakewood,* New Jersey 101.5 (Mar. 28, 2020), <https://nj1015.com/man-arrested-after-facebook-threat-against-jews-in-lakewood/>; Erik Larsen, *Coronavirus in NJ: Howell man charged with ‘terroristic threats’ against Lakewood Community,* Asbury Park Press NJ (Mar. 27, 2020), <https://www.app.com/story/news/local/jackson-lakewood/2020/03/27/coronavirus-nj-howell-man-charged-terroristic-threats-against-lakewood-community/2931255001/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Kerry Burke et al, *‘Unacceptable’: Couple attacks Brooklyn Hasidic Jews, ripping off victims’ masks and blaming them for coronavirus,* NY Daily News (May 11, 2020), <https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-coronavirus-couple-attacks-hasidic-jews-rips-masks-off-20200511-md2wb4ljmngv5le6jvemp4wftm-story.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. *FBI Foils Neo-Nazi Plot to Blow Up Missouri Hospital,* Homeland Security News Wire (Mar. 27, 2020), <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20200327-fbi-foils-neo-nazi-plot-to-blow-up-missouri-hospital>; Nick R. Martin, *Heartland Terror,* The Informant (Mar. 25, 2020), <https://www.informant.news/p/heartland-terror>. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, East Longmeadow Man Charged with Attempted Arson at Longmeadow Assisted Living Residential Facility (Apr. 15, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/east-longmeadow-man-charged-attempted-arson-longmeadow-assisted-living-residential>. Reportedly, social media users referring to the facility as “that jew nursing home in longmeadow massachusetts,” and designated April 3, 2020 as “jew killing day.” On April 15, police arrested John Michael Rathbun and charged him with two counts of attempted arson. Rathbun has denied having any involvement in white supremacist groups. Christopher Mathlas, *Man Arrested In Alleged White Supremacist Plot To Burn Down Jewish Nursing Home,* Huffington Post (Apr. 16, 2020), <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/john-michael-rathbun-arrested-jewish-nursing-home-arson-massachuetts_n_5e988e67c5b6ead1400972ee>. Michael Levenson, *Man Charged With Trying to Blow Up Jewish Assisted-Living Home,* New York Times (Apr. 16, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/us/massachusetts-bomb-jewish-nursing-home.html?login=smartlock&auth=login-smartlock>. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. *Jewish Man Told “You Are Spreading the Virus” at New York Toyota Dealership,* StopAntisemitism (Mar. 24, 2020), <https://www.stopantisemitism.org/antisemitic-incidents-30/jewish-man-told-you-are-spreading-the-virus-at-new-york-toyota-dealership>; Daniel Axelrod, *Authorities investigate allegations of anti-Semitism at car dealership,* Times Herald-Record (Mar. 24, 2020), <https://www.recordonline.com/news/20200324/authorities-investigate-allegations-of-anti-semitism-at-car-dealership>. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. See <https://www.irna.ir/photo/83790495/آرامگاه-استر-و-مردخای-پس-از-آتش-سوزی?fbclid=IwAR0Rz75YzrYc3SlvnQVda6xPhsgqmaAwCqjIGeqcX6Mk6XNpCpIOcXIugzI> [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. *Arsonists Attack Synagogue In Russia’s Northwestern City of Arkhangelsk,* Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Apr. 14, 2020), <https://www.rferl.org/a/arsonists-attack-synagogue-in-russia-s-northwestern-city-of-arkhangelsk/30552610.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. John Torrendo, *Tomb stones appeared on the big swastika on jewish cemetery - the mayor shocked*, WireFax News (Apr. 29, 2020), http://www.wirenewsfax.com/tomb-stones-appeared-on-the-big-swastika-on-jewish-cemetery-the-mayor-shocked; *Jewish Tombstones in Finland Defaced with Swastikas*, StopAntiSemitism (Apr. 29, 2020), <https://www.stopantisemitism.org/antisemitic-incidents-33/jewish-tombstones-in-finland-defaced-with-swastikas>; *Anti-Semitism Due To COVID-19 In Finland, Where Even The Nazis Failed to Instill Hatred,* The Yeshiva World (May 3, 2020), <https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/1856180/anti-semitism-due-to-covid-19-in-finland-where-even-the-nazis-failed-to-instill-hatred.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. These include a Chabad Center in Massachusetts and synagogues in Alabama, California, Florida, and Maryland. See JBI report. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. *Rise in antisemitic hatred during COVID-19 must be countered with tougher measures, says UN expert,* (April 17, 2020), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25800&LangID=E>. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. UN Secretary-General, Global Appeal to Counter Hate Speech during COVID-19, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/we-must-act-now-strengthen-immunity-our-societies-against-virus-hate>. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. See United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, “Leave No One Behind: Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in the COVID-19 Crisis,” (29 April 2020)

    <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racial_Discrimination_Minorities_COVID.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>, para. 64 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. In the U.K. bill designed to give emergency powers to the government in light of coronavirus faced intense criticism from Britain’s Muslim and Jewish communities after it was revealed that they contained mandatory cremation provisions. The original text of the bill noted that “personal choice for body disposal will be respected as far as possible,” but that “where there is no suitable alternative, the power to direct may be used to direct whether a body is buried or cremated.” Ahmet Gurhan Kartal, *COVID-19: UK’s faith groups react to mandatory cremation,* Anadolu Agency (Mar. 23, 2020), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/covid-19uks-faith-groups-react-to-mandatory-cremation/1776042>. On March 23, the government agreed to amend the legislation with Health Secretary Matt Hancock stating that they recognized the need to “accede to the wishes of the families and faith communities. Jeremy Sharon, *UK to give religious exemptions for cremation during coronavirus pandemic,* The Jerusalem Post (Mar. 23, 2020), <https://www.jpost.com/international/uk-jews-worried-dead-may-be-cremated-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic-621997>. *Coronavirus: UK amends emergency bill that called for mandatory cremations,* Middle East Eye (Mar. 23, 2020), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/coronavirus-uk-amends-emergency-bill-muslims-jews-other-faiths-mandatory-cremations>. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. On March 27, the Romanian government ordered that all coronavirus victims be buried on the day of their death or cremated. This order faced criticism from the Jewish community because cremation is not allowed under Jewish religious law, and burials are not allowed to take place on Shabbat. In response, Rabbi Avigdor Nebenzahl, the president of the Rabbinical Council of Zaka, ruled that the Bucharest Jewish community could have a Christian bury any coronavirus victim who died on Shabbat in order to prevent them from being cremated. Marcy Oster, *Bucharest Jews can bury coronavirus dead on Shabbat to avoid cremation, a rabbinical authority rules,* Jewish Telegraphic Agency (Mar. 30, 2020), <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/bucharest-jews-can-bury-coronavirus-dead-on-shabbat-to-avoid-cremation-a-rabbinical-authority-rules>. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. In late March, it was reported that in Buenos Aires, Ruben Bercovich, the first Jewish victim of the coronavirus in Argentina, was cremated by local authorities, who said that cremation was a best practice to avoid spread of the disease. Following his death and cremation, dialogue began between Argentine rabbis and officials to find a compromise on this matter. *Cremation of first Jewish victim of coronavirus in Argentina stirs controversy,* The Times of Israel (Mar. 29, 2020), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/cremation-of-first-jewish-victim-of-coronavirus-in-argentina-stirs-controversy/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/experiences-and-perceptions-antisemitism-second-survey-discrimination-and-hate>. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. <https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismSurvey2019> [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid. ¶ 47. Evidence including a survey carried out by AJC in September-October 2019 demonstrated that in 75% of cases, American Jews who had experienced an antisemitic attack or remark in the past five years had not reported it to the authorities. *AJC Survey of American Jews on Antisemitism in America,* AJC (2019), <https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismSurvey2019>; See also European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism: Second survey on discrimination and hate crimes against Jews in the EU, 12 (2018), <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf> (finding that 79 per cent of respondents who had experienced harassment in the five years preceding the survey had not reported abuse, primarily because they believed that nothing would change if they did). [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, *Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance,* ¶¶ 46-47, U.N. Doc. A/74/358 (Sep. 20, 2019), <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. *Working Definition of Antisemitism,* International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (Jun. 27, 2016), <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/stories/working-definition-antisemitism>. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, *Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance,* ¶ 77, U.N. Doc. A/74/358 (Sep. 20, 2019), <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (2018). Available at <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. UNSG António Guterres, The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights (2020). Available at <https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Asperation_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. See Felice Gaer, Director of AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, Plenary Remarks at the 7th meeting of the Istanbul Process – “Combatting religious intolerance: Building inclusive and resilient societies and pushing back against incitement to hatred and violence” (Nov. 18, 2019). Available at <https://www.jbi-humanrights.org/JBI%20Felice%20Gaer%20Plenary%20Remarks%207th%20Istanbul%20Process%20Mtg%20The%20Hague%20Nov%202019.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)