

# ANTISEMITISM TODAY

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## The oldest hatred – from antiquity to the present

“Anti” is a Greek word meaning “against”, while “semite” is derived from the Hebrew word “shem.” According to the Bible, Shem was one of Noah’s three sons and a forefather of the Jews.

### Two definitions of antisemitism:

- 1) Antisemitism is more than xenophobia. It is more than social or religious prejudice. It is a world view which sees the existence of the Jews as the origin of all problems.
- 2) The IHL (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) defines antisemitism as follows: “Antisemitism is a specific way of perceiving Jews. It can be expressed as hatred of Jews. Antisemitism is directed in word and deed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their possessions, as well as toward Jewish institutions and religious installations.”

### Two definitions of discrimination:

- 1) It is wrong to think of discrimination as something directed only against inferior persons. Discrimination is every form of unjustified or unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on perceptible characteristics, such as age, ethnicity or handicap, or on non-perceptible characteristics, such as world view, religion or sexual orientation.
- 2) According to Amnesty International, discrimination is a coarse violation of human rights. Discriminated persons are systematically hindered from practicing their human rights, on the basis of individual or group characteristics.

A drastic increase in antisemitism can be observed all over Europe, including Switzerland, where Swiss Jews feel increasingly discriminated against because of their faith.

### Statistics and Reports

For more information, we recommend reading studies by the [ZHAW](#) (Zurich University of Applied Sciences) and reports from [GRA](#) (Foundation against Racism and Antisemitism) and [SIG](#) (Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities).

Jews have always suffered varying degrees of discrimination in words and actions, and this may well continue to be a reality. An anti-Semite, however, believes that Jews are inherently evil. Some antisemites have a bad opinion of Jews, while others go as far as to demand their death.

Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, conspiracy theories and enmity towards Jews have reached new heights. The number of antisemitic crimes has increased across the globe. Old myths mix with new fears. Modern antisemitism includes Holocaust-denial, anti-Zionism and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (an antisemitic pamphlet based on untruths). The social media networks present effective channels for dissemination. Online verbal violence, in the form of insults, humiliations, exposure and derision has the potential to inflict massive emotional and social damage on Jews.



Graffiti at train station, close to Zurich, Switzerland:  
"We have traitors in our country! They're called Jews!"

Photo: Private