

Kentucky Jewish Council Antisemitism Report 2024

What is Antisemitism?

Antisemitism is a form of discrimination or prejudice against Jews. It can manifest itself in various ways, including hostility, prejudice, and violence toward Jews, as well as the promotion of negative stereotypes about Jews. Antisemitism has a long history, dating back to ancient times, and it continues to be a problem in many parts of the world today. It is often based on the belief that Jews are a distinct and inferior race, or that they have certain negative characteristics or traits that make them different from other people. However, these beliefs are not based on fact and are instead rooted in prejudice and discrimination. Antisemitism is a form of racism.

The word "antisemitism" was coined in the late 19th century. The term was used to describe prejudice and discrimination against Jews. It was first used in this sense in an 1879 essay by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr, who used it to describe his belief that Jews were a distinct and inferior race that posed a threat to the purity of the Aryan race. The term quickly gained popularity and was widely used to describe anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe and beyond. Contrary to a popular misconception, it does not refer to Semitic peoples as a whole.

In 2021, Kentucky adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of antisemitism, which includes:

1. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
2. Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.
3. Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

4. Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
5. Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
6. Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
7. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
8. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
9. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
10. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
11. Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel.
12. Holocaust denial or minimizing the scale and impact of the Holocaust, a genocide in which six million Jews were killed by the Nazi regime during World War II.

The Full IHRA Definition, which has been adopted by the United States, and 36 other nations, can be found here:

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement>

It is important to note that not all forms of antisemitism are overt or explicitly expressed. Some forms of antisemitism may be more subtle or disguised, and may not be immediately apparent to others.

ANTISEMITISM IN 2024

Since the horrific massacre of October 7th last year, we have seen a global wave of antisemitism, unprecedented since the Holocaust. Example include

- A Pogrom against Jews in Amsterdam,
- The weaponization of the ICJ and other international bodies,
- A sharp rise in antisemitism on college campuses, including violence,
- Targeting of Jewish centers in the United States,
- A wave of antisemitism on social media including X and Tiktok,
- Mainstreaming of Antisemitism by NGOs such as HRW, CAIR, UN, and Academia

ANTISEMITISM IN KENTUCKY - 2024

January 2024

- **1/16 Synagogue Threatened (Louisville)**
A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, intended to cause panic
- **1/17 Oct 7th Footage Presentation Protested (Frankfort)**
When the footage of the October 7th Massacre was presented to members of the government and members of the press, a Pro-Hamas rally was arranged in response. The rally included calls for violence against Jews and direct threats against Jewish leaders
- **1/25 Holocaust Lecture Requires Police at UK (Lexington)**
At the University of Kentucky, signs advertising testimony by an 88-year-old Holocaust survivor were vandalized, and the speech required police protection
- **1/27 Jewish Group Threatened by BHI (Lexington)**
A Jewish organization in Lexington received a threat from the Black Hebrew Israelite Hate Cult

February 2024

- **2/7 Antisemitic Op-Ed (Media)**
Ricky Jones of the University of Louisville published an op-ed in the Courier-Journal, calling for fewer efforts to combat antisemitism
- **2/8 Louisville Synagogue Threatened (Louisville)**
A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats
- **2/12 Jewish Organization Threatened (Lexington)**
A Lexington Jewish group received a message including a call for violence against Jews
- **2/14 Antisemitic Signs Posted (Bowling Green)**
White Supremacists posted antisemitic signs on businesses in Bowling Green accusing Jews of controlling the government.
- **2/15 PFLP event held at U of L (Louisville)**
An event in support of US-recognized terrorist group PFLP was hosted at the University of Louisville
- **2/19 Rabbi Threatened at Lexington City Council Meeting (Lexington)**
A Lexington Rabbi was threatened at a Lexington City Council Meeting. Lexington Public Safety Commissioner Ken Armstrong ordered police to escort the Rabbi out of the building for his safety.
- **2/27 Jewish Man Threatened (Lexington)**
A Jewish man speaking at the Lexington City Council was threatened by a Pro-Hamas protestor, requiring the protestor to be removed from the chamber
- **2/27 Speech Disrupted at the University of Kentucky (Lexington)**
Dozens of protestors attempted to shut down a speech by Ian Haworth hosted by the TP USA student group. Police were forced to intervene, and following the event, students were followed to their car, threatened, and mobbed.
- **2/28 Bourbon County Bridge Vandalized (Millersburg)**
A historic covered bridge in Bourbon County was vandalized with a swastika

March 2024

- **3/2 Senator Receives Antisemitic Messages (Frankfort)**
A Kentucky State Senator receives antisemitic messages through their official communication
- **3/2 Antisemitic March (Lexington)**
A Pro-Hamas march took place in Lexington, including calls for violence against the Jewish community
- **3/2 Antisemitic Marc Murphy Cartoon (Media)**
University of Louisville Professor and Courier-Journal cartoonist Marc Murphy, known for his long history of antisemitic and racist statements and cartoons, publishes antisemitic cartoon

- **3/3 Antisemitic Activism in Louisville (Louisville)**
An extremist antisemitic fringe group distributed antisemitic flyers and harassed pedestrians in Louisville
- **3/14 Louisville City Council Meeting Disrupted (Louisville)**
A Louisville City Council meeting considering a pro-Hamas resolution erupted into chaos including threats against Jewish community members in the chamber. The Motion failed
- **3/28 Covington City Council Meeting Harassed (Covington)**
An effort to create a pro-Hamas resolution that included harassment and threats erupted at a Covington City Hall meeting, including calls for violence against Jewish people, and threats and harassment of Jewish community leaders

April 2024

- **4/9 Antisemitic Vandalism (Paducah)**
A Paducah High School was vandalized by spray painting swastika on the building
- **4/15 Neo-Nazi Harassment (Louisville)**
A Neo-Nazi group littered a Louisville neighborhood with flyers denying the holocaust and making accusations against the Jewish community
- **4/16 Antisemitic Op-ed Kentucky Kernel (Media)**
The University of Kentucky Student Paper printed an op-ed suggesting Jewish students were not welcome on campus.
- **4/17 Congressman Massie Votes against Condemning Calls for Violence (DC)**
Congressman Thomas Massie was the single Republican vote against condemning the antisemitic call for genocide of the Jewish people
- **4/19 Calls for Violence against Jews at Derby Breakfast (Louisville)**
The University of Louisville chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine, a Hamas-linked extremist group, staged a protest at the annual Derby Breakfast including calls for violence against Jews.
- **4/20 Pro-Hamas Rally at EKV (Richmond)**
A Pro-Hamas rally at Eastern Kentucky University called for violence against Jewish people.
- **4/22 McGarvey Talk Disrupted with Calls for Genocide (Louisville)**
A talk by Congressman Morgan McGarvey was interrupted by pro-Hamas protestors, including calls for a Genocide of the Jewish people
- **4/25 Antisemitic Marc Murphy Cartoon (Media)**
University of Louisville Professor and Courier-Journal cartoonist Marc Murphy, known for his long history of antisemitic and racist statements and cartoons, published an antisemitic cartoon claiming Jews control the American government.
- **4/30 Antisemitic Pegasus Parade Disruption (Louisville)**
Pro-Hamas protestors disrupted the Pegasus Parade in Louisville, including signs and slogans calling for violence against Jewish people

May 2024

- **5/ 1 Pro-Hamas rally at UK (Lexington)**
A Pro-Hamas rally at the University of Kentucky took place, with University Police asking Jewish community members to avoid the campus Library. The Rally included calls for the death of Jews, as well as vandalism, and targeted harassment of Jewish Students.
- **5/1 Pro-Hamas rally at EKV (Richmond)**
A Pro-Hamas rally at Eastern Kentucky University called for violence against Jewish people.
- **5/1 Antisemitic Cartoon Published by Marc Murphy (Louisville)**
University of Louisville Professor and Courier-Journal cartoonist Marc Murphy, known for his long history of antisemitic and racist statements and cartoons, publishes an antisemitic cartoon minimizing the holocaust
- **5/2 Pro-Hamas Rally, (Louisville)**
A Pro-Hamas rally took place in Louisville, including calls for violence against Jews. One of the rally leaders was Louisville City Council Candidate JP Lyninger
- **5/3 Jewish Student Harassed at Tin Roof (Lexington)**
A Jewish community member was harassed and threatened at the Tin Roof bar in Lexington
- **5/8 Antisemitic KY Lantern Editorial (Media)**
An Editorial in the Kentucky Lantern engaged in Holocaust Minimization and demonization of the Jewish community
- **5/10 Neo-Nazi group hangs Hateful Stickers (Henderson)**
A group of masked men identifying as 'Patriot Front' vandalized local businesses with stickers containing hateful messages, including of Jewish control of the US government
- **5/12 Jewish Family Harassed (Lexington)**
A Jewish man walking with his children was yelled at by a passing car with screeds about their Jewish faith
- **5/14 Jewish Organization Threatened (Lexington)**
A Lexington Jewish group received a message including a call for violence against Jews
- **5/15 University of Kentucky Report to Governor Antisemitism Taskforce**
At a meeting of Governor Beshear's Antisemitism Task Force held at the University of Kentucky, UK Administration members denied any antisemitism problem at the University, despite threats, arrests, and multiple complaints from Jewish students.
- **5/15 Pro-Hamas Rally (Louisville)**
A Pro-Hamas Rally was hosted by the University of Louisville's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine, a Hamas-linked group. The Rally included calls for violence against Jews
- **5/15 Antisemitic Vandalism at Seneca Park (Louisville)**
Following the Pro-Hamas rally at the University of Louisville, Seneca Park, located in the densest population of Jews in Kentucky, was vandalized with spray paint encouraging the murder of Jews

- **5/15 Hamas Rally (Lexington)**
A Pro-Hamas Rally was hosted by the extremist group, 'Lex 4 Palestine'. The Rally included calls for violence against Jews
- **5/20 Murray State Professor Authors Unhinged Twitter Screeed Against Jews**
Murray State Professor Ihsan Alkhatib, a Public Employee went on a dangerous rant online, accusing Jews as a whole of genocide
- **5/24 Neo-Nazi group hangs Hateful Stickers (Mount Sterling)**
A group of masked men identifying as 'Patriot Front' vandalized local businesses with stickers containing hateful messages, including of Jewish control of the US government

June 2024

- **6/7 Rep. Thomas Massie Spread Antisemitic Conspiracy on Tucker Carlson (Media)**
While appearing on Tucker Carlson's Vlog, Thomas Massie accused every other member of the American government of being controlled by Jews.
- **6/7 synagogue threatened (Louisville)**
A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats
- **6/12 Louisville synagogue vandalized with sign (Louisville)**
A sign was insidiously planted in front of a Louisville synagogue
- **6/14 3 Synagogue threatened (Louisville)**
A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats
- **6/14 UK Jewish Student Center receives threat (Lexington)**
The Chabad Jewish Student Center at the University of Kentucky received a threatening message, targeting Jewish students
- **6/15 Synagogue threatened (Louisville)**
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- **6/30 Antisemitic Convention and online forum Hosted in Kentucky (Somerset)**

A collection of Neo-Nazi, Black Separatist, and Groyper groups met in Somerset Kentucky for an online rally dedicated to calls for violence against Jews globally. The space used was rented under false pretenses.

July 2024

- **7/11 Synagogue threatened (Louisville)**

A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats

- **7/14 Neo-Nazis Harass Shoppers with Antisemitic Flyers (Franklin)**

A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats

- **7/29 Quintez Brown's Guilty Plea Leads to Harassment of Jews (Media)**

When Quintez Brown was arrested for the attempted assassination of a Jewish politician, his bail was posted, and many activists attacked Jews for speaking out, led by his mentor, Ricky Jones. Upon his guilty plea, this Harassment continued

- **7/30 Synagogue threatened (Louisville)**

A Louisville synagogue received a threatening message, including death threats

August 2024

- **Aug 3 Pro-Hamas Rally (Louisville)**

A Pro-Hamas Rally was hosted by the University of Louisville's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine, a Hamas-linked group. The Rally included calls for violence against Jews

- **Aug 9 Hamas Rally (Lexington)**

A Pro-Hamas Rally was hosted by extremist group 'Lex 4 Palestine'. The Rally included calls for violence against Jews

September 2024

- **9/17 Jewish Student Threatened at UK (Lexington)**

A Jewish student on the University of Kentucky campus was threatened with bodily harm on their way to class. The threat included common antisemitic tropes

October 2024

- **10/4 Children Threatened Outside Synagogue (Lexington)**

Jewish children attending services at Chabad in Lexington were harassed and threatened by University of Kentucky students for their Jewish faith. The children ranged from 6-8 years old

- **10/5 Pro Hamas Rally at the Waterfront (Louisville)**
A year after the devastating October 7th pogrom, the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, a host of radical groups hosted a rally at the Louisville Waterfront Park. Both signs and slogans celebrated the attack and called for further violence against Jews
- **10/7 October 7th Rally UK (Lexington)**
On the first anniversary of the devastating October 7th pogrom, the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, a rally was held at the University of Kentucky Library, which called for violence against Jews. Jewish Students passing the protest were accosted and harassed
- **10/10 Jewish Students Ignored by University Administration (Lexington)**
Following the Antisemitic Pro-Hamas Rally at the University of Kentucky, Jewish students begged the administration for their attention to this issue. They received no response.

November 2024

- **11/17 SJP founding (Lexington)**
As colleges across the nation moved to sanction the Hamas-linked Students For Justice in Palestine hate group, responsible for numerous acts of violence and attempts at terrorism across the nation, the University of Kentucky welcomed a new chapter to campus.
- **11/17 Antisemitic Grafitti at Cherokee Park (Louisville)**
Cherokee Park in Louisville was vandalized with a series of antisemitic and racist spraypainted messages, including language and a swastika

December 2024

- **12/7 Holiday Parade Appropriated (Lexington)**
Lexington's annual holiday parade included a group from the radical 'Lex 4 Palestine' group with signs denying Jewish history, and with support expressed for violence against Jews
- **12/17 City Council Accosted (Covington)**
At the final Council meeting of outgoing Covington Mayor Joe Meyer, a group of Pro-Hamas activists abused public comment, and following the meeting, accosted council members ending in arrests
- **12/26 Jewish Organization Director receives death threat (Lexington)**
The Director of a local Lexington Jewish group received a death threat by phone.

Top Concerns for 2025

Our Annual report saw three key sources of antisemitism that we as a Commonwealth have the responsibility to address in the coming year

1. University Campuses

We have seen a tremendous wave of antisemitism on College Campuses across the country, and Kentucky is no different, from Antisemitic Professors at U of L, UK, NKU, and Murray, to student-led movements that call for violence against Jews and have facilitated exclusion and harassment of Jewish Students. The DEI ideology, which ostensibly addresses situations like this, has failed Jewish students entirely.

2. Media

Some in local Media, particularly print media, have failed at their responsibility as a platform. Choosing not to elevate hate is not a free speech issue, but a moral one. This has been particularly flagrant in the editorial choices at the Courier-Journal.

3. Radical Political/Islamist Ideologies

Kentucky, like the nation, has seen a massive rise in political extremism, from Neo-Nazi Groyper movements to Islamist ideologies, targeting American values, and the Jewish community in particular. Addressing this is not just a Jewish concern, but an American one.