



The State of Israel

Ministry for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs

Annual Report on the Topic:

# **Anti-Semitism in 2013**

## **Trends and Events**

**Ministry for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs**

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## ***Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs***

I am honored to present this report containing a survey of world events which occurred with an anti-Semitic background in 2013. This summary presents the major trends in anti-Semitism faced by Jewish communities around the world.

At first glance, there are those that will find certain optimistic signs in this report, as there was no rise in the number of worldwide violent anti-Semitic incidents as compared to 2012. . But the truth is that, fundamentally, the situation has only worsened. True, this year there were no prominent incidents with great global resonance, such as the anti-Semitic terror attack in 2012 on the Otzar HaTorah Jewish school in the French city of Toulouse, in which a teacher and three students, all Jewish, were killed. But 2013 was the year in which the anti-Semitic atmosphere took over Jewish life throughout the world, and particularly in Europe.

As indicated in a survey of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) cited in the report, many Jews in Europe are being forced to change their way of life in fear of an anti-Semitic attack. Some 23% of European Jews do not attend Jewish institutions or events due to their fear of being attacked on the way to them. 38% avoid walking in public with distinctly Jewish signs such as a yarmulke or a Star of David, and 66% see anti-Semitism as a problem that impacts their lives in a fundamental and constant fashion. What's worse is the fact that most of Europe's Jews have come to terms with anti-Semitism as a chronic disease that has no hope of treatment or eradication: 77% of European Jews do not even bother reporting to any organization – Jewish, governmental, or otherwise – regarding anti-Semitic bullying, insults, and harassment that they experience, due to their belief that the complaints will not be dealt with and that the attackers will not be identified.

Speaking as a representative of the State of Israel, we cannot let ourselves be reconciled to this reality. One of the objectives of the founding of the State of Israel was to serve the Jews of the world as a beacon cutting through the darkness to counteract anti-Semitism, and to provide them a feeling of confidence stemming from the knowledge that they have who to turn to that will not let anti-Semitism affect and dictate the Jewish way of life in the world.

The world's anti-Semitic climate gains momentum from the popularity of anti-Semitic trends in the world of social networks, which enable anti-Semitic demonstrations and events, and the spread of anti-Semitic venom to masses of people throughout the world, with the simple press of a button. The case of the quenelle inverted arm gesture, which made headlines toward the end of 2013, is a clear example of this kind of phenomenon. This anti-Semitic salute, deriving its inspiration from the Nazi salute, spread through the social networks with hundreds of thousands of shared pictures depicting this gesture executed defiantly next to Jewish institutions, Holocaust memorials, and Jewish memorial sites.

Of course, there was no absence also this year of the new anti-Semitism, which tries to disguise itself through false claims of legitimate criticism against Israel and Zionism. The fact that, despite the absence in 2013 of a military conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, no reduction was observed in the number of anti-Israel statements and deeds, disproving once again the claims that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the cause for the growth of anti-Semitism. The simple truth is that anti-Zionism, prevalent

mainly among the global left but not limited to it, has become a mask used to hide real anti-Semitism, and thus this trend should be fought in the same way that we fight against blatant and open anti-Semitism. The Ministry for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, which I head, and which is entrusted by the government of Israel with the struggle against the plague of anti-Semitism, sees with the utmost importance the uncompromising fight against anti-Semitism as an inseparable part of the mutual responsibility between Israel and the Diaspora, and will continue to act in cooperation with national institutions and other organizations in order to eradicate global anti-Semitism and return a feeling of security to our brethren in the Diaspora.

In May 2013, after a two year hiatus, the International Forum for the Struggle Against Anti-Semitism, chaired by the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, restarted its operations. I also decided to restart the regular convening of this forum on a biannual frequency, with the next meeting to take place in Jerusalem in 2015.

This year, representatives from many countries including ministers, members of parliament, and administration representatives from Israel and the world over, participated in the forum along with NGOs from both inside and outside the Jewish world, all seeking to find solutions and new modes of action in the struggle against all shades of anti-Semitism, as described in this report.

I would like to thank the professional staff of the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University, headed by Prof. Dina Porat, as well as the staff of the Moshe Kantor Database for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism, for their important work in the tracking and research of the anti-Semitic trends and events that occur worldwide. Their work has made the publication of this essential report possible. The Ministry for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs has maintained close and successful cooperation with the Kantor Center for many years, and we will continue to work together to bring this crucial information to the attention of the government and the public.

### **Summary of: 2013 Report on Anti-Semitism - Trends and Events**

The year 2013 was complex as far as anti-Semitism is concerned, especially in light of the mounting of troubling reports coming from all over the world, particularly Europe, of anti-Semitic incidents and expressions.

This accretion of reports has created a **general feeling among Jews - individuals and communities** – that the anti-Jewish climate in Europe is gradually getting worse. . One of the most prominent examples of this trend is in France. At a celebration marking 70 years since the founding of the CRIF, the central council of French Jews, Roger Cukierman, the council president, said that the Jews of France live in a bad climate, and that what is happening in their country is insulting and hurtful to them.

At the center of the following report on trends and incidents will be the conclusion that the trend, as felt by the Jews, of rising and worsening anti-Semitism, stems mainly from the severity of the verbal and graphic expressions, the insults, the harassment, and the threats encountered by Jews in their everyday lives, which create a gradually more oppressive atmosphere, and not necessarily from a rise in the

number of violent events.

This conclusion gains credence in light of a survey conducted by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

### **The FRA Survey**

The anti-Semitism prevalent in Europe is a source of concern even among non-Jews. This is based on the fact that the rise in anti-Semitism is taking place at the same time as a growing global trend of racist incidents against minorities. For the sake of demonstration, Australia was witness to two such attacks, in two separate incidents, by the same youth group – one against Asian immigrants, the other against a groups of Jews.

On the heels of these two parallel trends, the FRA – charged with protecting the fundamental rights of minorities - published a comprehensive **survey** on the state of anti-Semitism. The survey was conducted in the eight central countries in Europe, in which live approximately one-million Jews (90% of the EU's Jews): Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden, and the UK. The survey polled approximately 6,000 Jews.

Among the troubling results of the survey, the following data is worth noting:

- 23% of respondents do not participate in Jewish cultural events, or attend Jewish institutions, out of a concern of being attacked en route.
- 38% do not leave the house with identifying signs such as a yarmulke or Star of David.
- 77% do not report to any organization, Jewish or local, regarding bullying, insults, and harassment they experience, because of an expectation that the report will not be dealt with, and that the attacker will not be identified.
- 33% of respondents are afraid of falling victim to an anti-Semitic attack.
- 29% of respondents are considering emigrating from their countries.
- 66% of respondents see anti-Semitism as a problem that impacts their lives.
- 76% noted that anti-Semitism has grown worse over the last five years.
- Approximately one-quarter experienced over the course of the year preceding the survey, an incident that included a verbal insult.
- Nearly half are concerned about the possibility that they will fall victim to an insult or harassment over the next year.

The countries with the highest percentages of reporting of a rise in anti-Semitism are Hungary, France, Belgium, and Sweden. It would seem that, in relative terms, the situation is less severe in Italy, Germany, the UK, and Latvia.

Approximately 80% of respondents in Hungary are of the opinion that the main threat stems from groups of the far right, while in France and Belgium most respondents (73% and 60%, respectively) pointed to radical Muslims as the main source for the anti-Semitic threat. Classic anti-Semitism, stemming from Christian sources, occupies last place in the list according to this survey.

There is expected to be a follow-up to the FRA survey involving an in-depth survey of Hungarian Jews sponsored by the **New York Times**.

### **Removal of the Working Definition of Anti-Semitism from the FRA Website**

A few weeks after the publication of the survey, the FRA removed from its website the **working definition of Anti-Semitism** that was used internationally since it was formulated and accepted at the beginning of 2005.

According to this definition, anti-Zionist expressions, a hostile attitude to the existence of the State of Israel, comparing it to Nazi Germany, and discrimination against it may be considered in certain cases as anti-Semitism. Due to the broadness of the definition, it was attacked a number of times in courts in England and the US.

The definition, which was formulated in a joint effort of a great number of scholars and organizations, was considered an international achievement (even racism has yet to receive an official and accepted definition), and was accepted and recommended for use over the course of nine years by parliaments and courts both in the US and in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

To date, no satisfying explanation has been offered for the removal of the definition from the website – only the claim that the definition was never officially adopted as a binding document by the European Union. For now, no renewal of discussions has been proposed that can turn the definition into an official binding document.

It would appear that there is no connection between the removal of the definition and the anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli fervor that is intensifying in parallel to a worsening of expressions of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, as evident from the survey, Jews in Europe feel now more than ever, subject to attacks both of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist in nature .

The responses of those surveyed can serve as a solid basis for the formulation of a definition of anti-Semitism to replace the existing one. This alternative definition would include five kinds of injury in the public domain: graffiti with anti-Semitic content, vandalism against Jewish sites of any kind, political expressions with anti-Semitic content, anti-Semitic expressions in the media, and anti-Semitic expressions on the Internet. In addition, five types of injury in the private domain will be defined: harassment, insults, threats, attacks, and vandalism against private property. The new definition will integrate elements of the original definition relating to expressions of delegitimization of the State of Israel.

### **The Phenomenon of the Inverted Arm Salute Known as the “Quenelle”**

During the last weeks of 2013 a phenomenon began to spread from France to other countries in Europe and the rest of the world involving an **inverted arm salute**. Just as the prohibited swastika was replaced in the 1990s with other symbols, so too the Nazi “Sieg Heil” salute has recently been replaced with a new-style salute that involves an inverted arm gesture, known as the Quenelle, created by French entertainer Dieudonne. Dieudonne is a self-declared Holocaust denier who founded an anti-Zionist party

to get elected to the European Parliament. The gesture he invented is executed with a strong straightening of the right hand in a downward direction, and the placement of the left-hand towards the right shoulder with fingers extended.

This salute spread immediately on the Internet, especially on social networks, with the backing of hundreds of thousands of “likes,” selfies, and group pictures. It is actively performed among various crowds, mainly youth, most of who apparently are not affiliated with organized groups. Among these circles, the number of Muslims and blacks is prominent, and sometimes the Quenelle serves as a kind of calling card for members of far right organizations and their supporters. This salute is performed in a purposeful and defiant manner at Jewish sites such as synagogues, cemeteries, and Holocaust memorials. Thus, for example, photographs have been distributed of people performing the Quenelle opposite the well-known gateway at the entrance to Auschwitz, in front of the Holocaust memorial in the heart of Berlin, and in the Western Wall Plaza next to IDF soldiers who in their naiveté agreed to be photographed. Even though this gesture has been given the humorous moniker “Quenelle,” it cannot be claimed that this hand gesture is performed good-naturedly.

Governments and parliaments emphasize legislation as a tool against radical trends, and they work to expand the applicability of existing laws. The question they now are facing is whether a way can be found to prohibit this phenomenon, and if so, will it be possible to enforce it and stop the phenomenon from spreading. The French interior minister is currently examining these issues. It is clear that there is a large gap between the effectiveness of legislation and statements of political leaders, on the one hand, and the reality on the ground on the other. Legislation and statements of public figures can help, but significant impact can only be made through normative and educational means that will tackle the problem and not its symptoms.

### **Violence and Atmosphere**

It is usually possible to track the numbers of the various kinds of violent events, such as vandalism of public and private property and attacks against individuals, only insofar as the victims report the crimes. In light of the troubling finding in the survey, according to which some 77% of verbal violence, harassment, and/or bullying is not reported at all, it is clear that the tracking bodies are only aware of a small portion of the overall picture. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that a large percentage of the severe cases, where victims required outside assistance, are reported, and can in most cases also be documented.

To date, according to conservative estimates yet to be tallied,, since 2012 a significant rise has not been reported in the number of violent attacks and acts of vandalism and destruction of Jewish property. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in 2012 the rates jumped by 30% relative to 2011. Furthermore, in light of the survey’s findings, it is reasonable to assume that the number of cases in reality much higher.

In the public realm, 2012 saw the rise of demands to prohibit Jewish customs such as ritual slaughter

and circumcision. The Kantor Center researchers are of the opinion that these demands, which come from human rights and animal rights organizations, do not necessarily stem from anti-Semitic motives, and are not even directed solely against Jews, but also Muslims. Nevertheless, it is clear that these demands strengthen the grave feelings of European Jews. In addition, such demands transmit a message that Judaism and Jewish customs are cruel by nature and contrary to justice, and thus they reinforce anti-Semitic messages.

As mentioned above, the Kantor Center report's findings attest that it is the soul and not the body that is the main victim of the new wave of anti-Semitism. The **bleak atmosphere contributes to a change in the point of view of the Jews of Europe regarding their country and surroundings, and reinforces their lack of personal security.**

### The Internet and Social Networks

In the past year, there has been a drop in the number of demonstrations against Israel, and it is possible that the social networks are gradually taking their place. According to the current report, social networks are growing gradually stronger in their ability to recruit masses for events, in their influence in the public-political arena, and in their becoming a mode of media that is relevant to the lives of – and that even runs the lives of – hundreds of millions of people, also in respect to manifestations of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

Some 75% of FRA survey respondents said that they see online anti-Semitism – which they encounter in YouTube videos, chats, and blogs – as a problem that exists in their country, and that online anti-Semitism has grown stronger over the last five years. The more severe attacks, in their eyes, are those directly aimed at a Jewish addressee and the younger they are the harder they feel the attacks' impact due to their greater involvement in the online realm and social networks. It is very difficult to fight against the ease with which material is uploaded to the Internet, and the anonymity that the material's uploader hides behind in most cases. A short video clip of just a few minutes, distributed this year on YouTube, in which a devout Muslim identified as Malik Naram, a fan of Dieudonne, unequivocally calls for the murder of all Jews wherever they may be, ran through the Internet unobstructed until enough complaints to remove it were assembled. The clip was removed, but its distributor has yet to be called to justice for incitement to murder, a fact that indicates that red lines that existed for several decades following the Second World War are today crossed without hindrance. Incidentally, Dieudonne himself has approximately half a million friends and followers on social networks, a fact that shows his influence and the tremendous scale on which the phenomenon of Internet anti-Semitism occurs.

The Internet in general, and social networks in particular, continue to spread absurd anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

In Chile and Argentina, there is a widespread claim on the Internet that thousands of Israeli soldiers, in civilian clothing, are mapping southern Chile in order to carry out Plan Andinia, which mainly involves the conquest of Patagonia in order to found there a Jewish state. According to these websites, the

Jewish millionaire, Edward Allstein, has purchased Patagonia from the president of Argentina in exchange for the cancellation of Argentina's debt to the World Bank.

In Venezuela, they blamed Israel and Zionism for the death of Hugo Chavez, and a pro-government website claimed that it exposed a conspiracy in which the government of Israel is planning an attack against Syria, and a third world war in which Israel will attack China and Russia.

The Nation of Islam, active in the United States, constantly raises outlandish conspiracy theories. One of the latest ideas involves a recommendation to Internet users to examine their dollar bills to find a Star of David hiding on the back.

Also in Russia, Jews are blamed for all the country's ills, including the economic situation, and thus opposition members as well as members of the regime are accused of selling out to Jewish wealth. Even in Kyrgyzstan, where Jewish and Zionist topics receive little attention, as in other Central Asian countries, Jews are accused of causing social and economic problems. In Ukraine, the accusation has been raised once again that US Jews lobbied the Soviet regime in 1944 to deport the Tatars from the Crimean peninsula in order to establish a Jewish Republic, and President Obama has been requested to compensate the Tatar people.

In Italy, approximately 100 websites of an anti-Semitic nature have been counted, including forums, webpages, and blogs.

In Canada, Internet harassment represents a significant percentage of all harassment, and half of the respondents in a local Jewish survey indicated the Internet as the source of most expressions of hate.

On social networks in Mexico, there was at the beginning of the year an unprecedented wave of anti-Semitic expressions relating to the Holocaust, such as "I burn like a Jew," which was the sixth most popular hashtag phrase on Twitter, and another Tweet that combined a children's game with a picture of dead Jews in a concentration camp. It should also be noted that well-known anti-Semitic websites, such as holywar.org and stormfront, continue to operate unimpeded.

### **Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism**

Since Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012, there has not been a military conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. In contrast, 2013 has been characterized by a series of conflicts within and between Arab and Muslim countries in the Middle East, with and without connection to the Arab Spring: the cruel attacks and great numbers of victims in Syria, and the wave of refugees fleeing it; the ongoing killings in Iraq; the conflicts in Egypt and the Sinai, and more.

At a conference held in October at Oxford, an argument was raised claiming that the phenomenon of anti-Zionism would be reduced in western countries due to the lack of proportionality between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the goings-on in other countries in the Middle East.



However, the material collected from countries of the West actually indicates a rising trend of anti-Zionism. The anti-Zionism prevalent mainly on the left, which has already become an integral part of the permanent worldview of individuals and groups of the left, can today be defined as a **cultural code** replacing anti-Semitism and enabling its disseminators to deny all connection to anti-Semitism. Such denial is referred today by scholars as “**anti-Semitism denial**” (following the form of “Holocaust denial”).

A comparison between western countries and Eastern Europe shows that, as in previous years, the anti-Zionist propaganda and expressions and negative attitudes towards Israel, represent in Eastern Europe a minor component in public discourse. This stands in contrast with what’s happening in Western Europe, where the new anti-Semitism – hiding behind claims of legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism – represents a significant component of anti-Semitic manifestations and discourse. In Russia and Ukraine, there is an especially prominent trend of the anti-Semitic propaganda, expressions of people in power and the media, and attacks against Jewish sites, being part of the lives of the local communities without the discussions usual in the West regarding the status of Israel and its actions.

Below is a detailed discussion of a number of specific regions and the unique qualities of anti-Semitism in those regions.

### Hungary

The most complex and controversial processes among European countries have taken place in Hungary, and it is considered a prominent test case for understanding current trends in anti-Semitism. As the FRA report notes, the level of concern among the Jews of Hungary is very high, and there has been a significant rise over the past year in the feelings of fear of anti-Semitic phenomena the Jewish community experiences, even if there has not been a significant rise in the number of violent incidents.

The processes of radicalization in Hungary should be viewed on the backdrop of several major trends:

- A. The upsurge in nationalist discourse since the rise to power of Fidesz (Alliance of Young Democrats, a right-center Christian-conservative party) in Spring 2010.

This government, which won widespread public support, has taken authoritarian steps in recent years that harm freedom of expression and independence of the judicial system, and which are opposed to the democratic-liberal spirit. These trends, together with the rise of anti-Semitism and the strengthening of trends of extremism and racism, have received scathing criticism from elements in the European Union. The response of the Hungarian administration to the EU criticism was a populist media campaign directed against EU institutions, tinged with an anti-western tone reminiscent of classic communist terminology from the Cold War.

- B. The radical Jobbik party, defined as neo-Nazi despite its denials, is a significant political force, currently the third-largest party in the Hungarian Parliament. This party succeeds in attracting broad swaths of the Hungarian people, including young intellectuals, and not only an audience of the socioeconomic lower-class. The party consistently takes an anti-Semitic line, as

demonstrated by the proposal of one of its representatives in parliament to conduct a registration of Hungarians with dual citizenship, meaning with Israeli citizenship. The proposal for “registration of the Jews” had wide coverage and resonance in the media, even outside of Hungary. The Jobbik party takes a revisionist approach regarding Hungarian historical memory, an approach with a consistent anti-Communist line – and in this is not very different from the ruling party. It should be noted that this party takes a racist stance also against what it calls “Gypsy crime.”

- C. The political polarization between left and right in Hungary is evident, despite the fact that the ruling party positions itself in a nationalist stance while flying the flag of “national and Christian values,” code words that in practice enable a certain proximity to the anti-Semitic discourse of the far right.
- D. One of the prominent expressions of current trends is the proliferation of the writings and ideas of anti-Semitic authors and intellectuals, including some who are distinctly pro-Nazi, in the educational system and cultural life. This promotes a set of values that is conservative, nationalist, and anti-Semitic. The waves of hate, the connection with fascist ideas of the past, very extreme anti-Semitic expressions, and anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli propaganda, especially on the backdrop of the economic crisis, are prominent on websites and social networks.

Along with the troubling trends described above, there are senior figures in Hungary who express their intense opposition to anti-Semitism and all expressions of racism. In meetings with Jewish figures and at major events, such as the conference of the World Jewish Congress in Budapest in 2013, country leaders emphasize their commitment to the struggle against extremism. At a large conference on the struggle against anti-Semitism that was held in the Hungarian parliament at the beginning of October 2013 (in the presence of Minister Yair Lapid, who reminded the Hungarians of their responsibility for the Holocaust, and of the anti-Semitic legislation approved by that same parliament), major figures, such as Foreign Minister János Martonyi, declared that Hungary is responsible for the Holocaust of its Jews. This was an unequivocal acceptance of responsibility, which had yet to be heard in such clear fashion during the last four years. The government of Hungary initiated and participated in events in Hungary and many other countries during the “Year of Wallenberg,” the hundredth anniversary of his birth. Furthermore, the government allocated great resources for memorial events in 2014 marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust of Hungarian Jews. Critics of the Orbán administration claim that this was a public relations campaign in preparation for general elections to be held in 2014, in other words, a tactical change not a strategic one in the struggle against anti-Semitism and the wave of nationalism washing over Hungary.

Here, too, there is a clear gap between legislation and official stance, on the one hand, and the Jewish community’s feelings about the situation on the other.

## Anti-Semitism in Arab Countries and the Palestinian Authority

It would seem that the prolonged struggles in the Middle East are continuing to divert attention both from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Jews and Israel. Nevertheless, it appears that anti-Semitic folklore have become ingrained among the broad public in the Arab countries, as evident in the constant blaming of Israel and Jews for conspiratorial involvement in events occurring between the rival camps, with reliance on the **Protocols of the Elders of Zion**, the blood libel, and imagery from the Nazi lexicon. In a May article in Syrian newspaper, **Al Thawra**, the mouthpiece of the Assad regime, the author, Amin Sharbih, claimed that the Zionists, inspired by the Protocols, aim to take over the world, incite wars and conflicts, and it is they that are behind the Syrian civil war. Another article written in the same vein spoke of the “Jewish Snake.”

References to the Protocols also appeared in the Palestinian media, such as in an article arguing for the historical authenticity of the Protocols that appeared on the Ma’an news agency website, and which was removed following Israeli protest. In one of the programs on PA television broadcast in August, a certain imam said that the Jews intend to corrupt the Muslims through women and wine – a strategy that has its source in the Protocols. The prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, also accused Israel, in the same month, following the deposition of President Morsi in Egypt, of being behind the deposition, in the spirit of the plot of the Protocols. The White House condemned the statements, and commentators see the incident as inseparable from the anti-Semitic feelings prevalent today in Turkey.

The blood libel was also raised in a March article in Jordanian newspaper **Al Arab Al Yawm**, written by Nawaf Al-Zaru following the visit of President Obama to Israel. Al-Zaru wondered if Obama knows that the Jews use Christian blood for baking matzah on Passover. The article was uploaded to the website of a Palestinian NGO, miftah.org, founded by Hanan Ashrawi, but was later removed and warranted an apology in the wake of Jewish and Israeli protests. The blood libel was also the main topic of two articles published in April in the Egyptian newspaper **Massar Al-Jadida**. An accusation against Israel for distributing drugs with the goal of harming Palestinian youth, especially in East Jerusalem, was raised on various occasions on PA television. In November, upon release of the report of the Yasser Arafat autopsy conducted in Switzerland, the PA’s Minister of Religious Affairs, Mahmoud Al-Habash, claimed that Arafat was poisoned just as Mohammed was poisoned in Khyber by its Jews. In April, Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi, considered the spiritual authority of the Sunni Islamic movements, rejected the possibility of participating in an interfaith conference in Doha, the capital of Qatar, saying that “the hands of the Jews are soiled with blood,” and thus one cannot shake their hands.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day invites references to the Holocaust, and based on the things published in the press and on social networks, denial and ignorance are equally prevalent. In May, an Egyptian youth conducted a street survey in Cairo about the Holocaust, asking the participants whether they have heard the word “Holocaust,” and what they know about it. Most of those interviewed had not heard of the word at all; some had heard and knew in a general way that it referred to something that happened during the Second World War in connection with the Jews.

Another example of the “modern” anti-Semitism in the Arab world is the way in which the image of

Hitler served as inspiration for advertisements both in Saudi Arabia and in Dubai. These advertisements were removed in the wake of protests from the Anti-Defamation League. A caricature carried in August by demonstrators in Egypt and in East Jerusalem, and spread through the social networks, compared General Sisi to Hitler. The big difference between Hitler and Sisi, according to the cartoon, was that “Hitler killed the Jews for his people” while “Sisi kills his people for the Jews.”

The election of Hassan Rouhani as president of Iran aroused great expectations for a change in Iranian attitude toward the West, and particularly toward the US. And, indeed, Rouhani, considered more well-mannered and moderate than his predecessor Ahmadinejad, chose to put on a friendly face towards the Jewish community and offered it a blessing before the Jewish New Year holiday. In a September CNN interview, he condemned the Holocaust as a crime, but his words aroused discontent among the conservative camp, which accused the television channel of misrepresenting some of his words. The Iranian news agency declared that “Rouhani did not use the term ‘Holocaust’ and did not characterize the Nazi mass murder as worthy of condemnation,” but said that it falls upon the historians to judge historical events.

The Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, uploaded a post on his Facebook page condemning the Nazi murder while simultaneously condemning the Zionists for murdering the Palestinians. Thus it seems that the subject of the Holocaust has remained for Iran an instrument for the delegitimization of Israel and Zionism.

The year 2013 enabled a glimpse into the condition of the few Jews remaining in Arab countries. In January 2013, pictures were distributed on the Internet showing the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Sousse, Tunisia. The condition of the Jews of Djerba, an ancient Jewish center where most of the Jews in Tunisia (900 of 1500) now live, is grave. They live in fear following incidents where the school and central synagogue were damaged.

The chief rabbi and leader of the Yemenite Jewish community, Yichye Yosef Salim, in a January interview on Yemenite television, told of the segregation and persecution faced by the Jewish community of Yemen. He cut his traditional sidelocks so as not to be harassed on the streets of Sa'dah. The Jews end up as victims of the struggle between the forces of the central government and those of the Shiite Houthi tribe who are rebelling in the north of the country, having been joined by Al-Qaeda forces back in 2005. Today, only about 90 Jews remain in Yemen.

In January, MEMRI publicized 2010 declarations of Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood, in which he encouraged his followers to nurture among the young hate for the Jews and Zionists, which he called “blood suckers, inciters of war, and the descendants of monkeys and pigs.” The statements were condemned by Israel and the US. Reactions in the Arab press were mixed: some blamed the severe words on Islamist regimes, while others rejected the accusations against Morsi and saw them as a smear campaign of the Jewish lobby meant to undermine Morsi’s relations with the US, and enlist support for Israeli racist actions against the Palestinians.

Along with all of this, note should be made of different voices coming from a courageous handful of liberals who condemn anti-Semitism and even fight it. Moreover, they take part in interfaith dialogues,

conferences on the Holocaust and Holocaust education, and visits to Auschwitz and Yad Vashem. Thus, for example, a delegation of Muslims from France took part in a visit to the Drancy camp in February, led by the imam of Drancy, Hassen Chalghoumi, who had already visited Yad Vashem in November 2012, and also took part in a forum for fighting anti-Semitism run by the Israeli Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Diaspora Affairs in Jerusalem in May 2013. Also a Palestinian delegation, arranged by the Palestinian-Israeli organization Fighting for Peace, visited Yad Vashem in April to gain understanding of the fears of Jewish society and to find a common denominator with it.