

**Submission regarding 2020 report on antisemitism and other forms of  
intolerance by the  
Community Security Trust (UK)**

5 December 2019

**Introduction**

This submission is from the Community Security Trust (CST), a Jewish charity that advises and supports the UK Jewish community in matters of antisemitism, extremism and terrorism.

The submission focusses on recent antisemitic incidents in the UK and the intersectionality of antisemitism and misogyny.

**Antisemitic incidents**

1. Reports of antisemitic incidents in the UK are published twice yearly by the CST; the following data and analysis is taken from our recent report *Antisemitic Incidents January – June 2019*.
2. CST recorded 892 antisemitic incidents across the United Kingdom in the first six months of 2019, the highest ever total that CST has recorded in the January-June period of any year, and is a rise of ten per cent from the 810 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2018. This now constitutes the second highest total that CST has ever recorded for the January-June period.
3. CST recorded over 100 antisemitic incidents in every one of the six months from January to June 2019 for the third consecutive year, continuing a pattern of historically high monthly totals of more than 100 incidents in all but two months since April 2016.
4. This surge in incident totals can partly be attributed to increasing reports of online expressions of antisemitism. So far this year, CST has already logged 323 reports of online antisemitism out of the overall total of 892 incidents. To compare, CST recorded 384 online antisemitic incidents in the whole of 2018.
5. This 46 per cent increase in recorded online incidents from the first half of last year to the first half of this year may reflect rising engagement in and intensity of arguments on social media, as well as a greater capacity and motivation to report online antisemitism to CST. These totals are only indicative, as the actual amount of antisemitic content that is generated and disseminated on online platforms is much larger. In some cases, social media has been used as a tool for coordinated campaigns of antisemitic harassment, threats and abuse directed at Jewish public figures and other individuals. It is difficult to assess whether the increase in online incidents in 2019 reflects a genuine rise in the amount of antisemitic expressions online; an increase in the reporting of online antisemitism to CST; or a combination of the two.

6. CST does not trawl the internet looking for online incidents to log, and will only record online incidents that are reported to CST by a member of the public, and where either the offender or the victim is based in the UK.
7. The highest monthly totals in the first half of 2019 were February and March, with 182 and 169 antisemitic incidents respectively. These are the joint-fourth and sixth highest monthly totals ever recorded by CST. They occurred when issues relating to Jews and antisemitism were prominent in news and politics due to the continuing controversy over antisemitism in the Labour Party. February saw several MPs leave the Labour Party, some of whom cited antisemitism as a prominent reason for their decision to leave.
8. CST recorded 85 incidents in the category of Assaults during the first six months of 2019, an increase of 37 per cent from the 62 incidents of this type recorded in the first half of 2018. This is the highest number of incidents in this category ever reported to CST in the first half of a year. None of the 85 antisemitic assaults recorded in the first six months of 2019 were serious enough to be classified as Extreme Violence, which would involve an attack that constituted grievous bodily harm or posed a threat to life.
9. The 85 antisemitic assaults make up almost ten per cent of the overall total of 892 incidents. Twenty-five of the reported assaults involved punching or kicking of the victim; 23 involved stones, bottles, eggs or other objects being thrown; and 53 contained an element of antisemitic verbal abuse. At least two incidents resulted in the victim needing to attend hospital.
10. CST recorded 710 incidents in the category of Abusive Behaviour over the first half of 2019, an increase of 15 per cent from the 616 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded between January and June 2018, forming 80 per cent of this year's total so far.
11. Sixty five per cent of the 892 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first six months of 2019 occurred in the UK cities with the largest Jewish populations, Greater London and Greater Manchester. Four hundred and fifty-three incidents were reported to have taken place in the former, comprising a fall of one per cent from 2018's total of 459 incidents in London across the same time period in 2018.
12. CST recorded 123 antisemitic incidents in Greater Manchester in the first six months of 2019, a decrease of less than one per cent from the 125 incidents in the corresponding timeframe and area last year.
13. In addition to the 892 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2019, a further 270 potential incidents were reported to CST which, upon investigation, appeared not to show evidence of antisemitic motivation, language or targeting.
14. What cannot be ignored is the contribution of online platforms to the record number of antisemitic incidents reported in the first half of 2019. Social media

in particular has proven an essential and convenient vessel, through which those who wish to harass, abuse and threaten Jewish individuals and institutions, as well as those who simply wish to disseminate their prejudice, are able to freely express their antisemitism.

15. The 323 reports of online antisemitism comprise 36 per cent of the 892 incidents recorded so far this year. To compare, there were 221 reports of online antisemitism in the first six months of 2018, constituting 27 per cent of all incidents during that period, and 384 in the whole of last year. The 46 per cent increase in recorded online incidents from the first half of last year to the first half of this year may reflect rising engagement in and intensity of arguments on social media, as well as a greater capacity and motivation to report online antisemitism to CST.
16. These totals are neither able nor aiming to communicate the actual amount of antisemitic content that is generated and spread on social media. An accurate figure would be impossible to quantify, given the vast array of material posted and platforms across which it is circulated, and would be meaningless in the context of CST's regular antisemitic incident reporting. Instead, they illuminate the reality that online forums continue to flourish as fertile ground for public and visible expressions of antisemitism, occasionally culminating in coordinated campaigns against Jewish public figures and institutions, which in turn are more likely to be reported.
17. CST recorded 85 antisemitic assaults in the first six months of 2019, a 37 per cent increase from the 62 assaults recorded from January to June 2018. None of these 85 antisemitic assaults were serious enough to be classified as Extreme Violence, which would involve an attack that constituted grievous bodily harm (GBH) or posed a threat to life.
18. In this time period, there were also 38 instances of Damage & Desecration of Jewish property recorded by CST, a fall of 14 per cent from the 44 incidents of this type reported in the first half of 2018. Five of the incidents in this category involved damage to Jewish schools, five saw the desecration of synagogue buildings and eighteen affected the vehicles and homes of Jewish people. All involved some element of antisemitic targeting, language or imagery.
19. CST recorded 49 direct antisemitic threats (categorised as Threats) during the first half of 2019, dropping 13 per cent from the 56 incidents of this type reported from January to June in 2018. Of these 49 incidents, 25 involved the offender verbally abusing the victim, 28 were made face-to-face, and 15 were conducted through online platforms.
20. There were 710 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the category of Abusive Behaviour in the first half of 2019, signalling a rise of 15 per cent from the 616 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded between January and June 2018, and forming 80 per cent of this year's overall total.

21. Beneath the umbrella of Abusive Behaviour crowd a wide range of incident types, including antisemitic verbal abuse, antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property, hate mail and online incidents that are not threats.
22. Among the 710 incidents of this kind, 318 involved verbal abuse; there were 106 instances of antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property; 26 occurrences of threatening language (without a direct threat being made); and 308 occasions of antisemitic abuse via the medium of online platforms.
23. It is not always easy to ascertain the ethnicity, gender and age of antisemitic incident offenders. Many face-to-face incidents involve fleeting public encounters in which the offenders may not be fully visible or leave the scene quickly. Victim and witness testimonies may be vague and disjointed, which is understandable given the nature of the ordeal that they have experienced. Many incidents do not involve face-to-face contact, and it is therefore not always possible to obtain a physical description of the perpetrator. Furthermore, those who commit antisemitic offences online may choose to completely anonymise themselves, which makes it almost impossible to garner any information about the person behind the abuse.
24. With these caveats in mind. CST received a description of the ethnic appearance of the offender or offenders in 245 of the 892 antisemitic incidents reported during the first six months of 2019. Of these, 158 (64 per cent) were described as white – north European; nine (four per cent) were described as white – south European; 28 (11 per cent) were described as black; another 28 (11 per cent) were described as south Asian; just two (one per cent) were described as east or south-east Asian; finally, 20 (eight per cent) were described as Arab or north African. These proportions have fluctuated very little from the first half of 2018, and are broadly typical of a period that does not include a trigger event from the Middle East.
25. CST has a national information sharing agreement with the National Police Chiefs' Council, which allows CST to share antisemitic incidents reports, fully anonymised to comply with data protection requirements, so that both CST and the Police can glean as complete a picture as possible of the number and nature of reported antisemitic incidents. CST began sharing antisemitic incident data with Greater Manchester Police in 2011, followed by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2012. Now, using the national agreement, CST shares anonymised antisemitic incident data with several forces around the UK. Any incidents that are reported to both CST and the Police are excluded from this process to ensure there is no 'double counting' of incidents. This collaboration has proved increasingly valuable. In the first half of 2019, 285 of the 892 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were reported by the Police as part of CST's national information sharing agreement. This makes the Police service the most prolific type of reporter of antisemitic incidents from January

to June 2019, comprising 32 per cent of the total for this time, compared to 40 per cent for the first half of 2018 (when the Police was also the principal single type of reporter).

### **Misogyny and Antisemitism**

26. There is a gender gap in both the experience and perception of antisemitism in the UK. In 2004, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) commissioned research into sentiments among Jews in the UK, including an analysis of disparities between men and women. The found that a larger proportion of women than men believed antisemitism to be a problem in the UK (52% compared to 45%), and more women than men believed antisemitism to have increased (69% compared to 63%).
  
27. In 2018, the Antisemitism Policy Trust and CST commissioned data scientist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz to probe the nature of gendered antisemitism online. Davidowitz investigated the neo-Nazi web forum Stormfront. He found more than 9000 threads related to feminism since its inception. Of those threads, more than 60% mentioned Jews. For context, Jews are mentioned in 39% of all threads on Stormfront on any subject; while 33% of threads on all subjects mention "blacks" (a significant shift from what some might perceive as traditional racism).
  
28. Another piece of research revealed at the Antisemitism Policy Trust-sponsored Sara Conference in 2018 was conducted by American NGO Media Matters. This focussed on gendered antisemitism on online message boards and its subsequent distribution.
  
29. They explained that mens' rights activists, white supremacists and others gather in ecosystems online and overlap, leading to conspiracism, harassment and efforts to frustrate public engagement. Focussing on one such message board, 4chan, Media Matters found there were, conservatively, 630,000 antisemitic posts in 2015, rising to 1.7 million in 2017. There were 530,000 misogynistic posts in 2015 and 840,000 in 2017. Looking at posts containing both misogyny and antisemitism Media Matters recorded an increase of 180% from 2015 to 2017.

### **Sources**

Antisemitic Incidents, January – June 2019, Community Security Trust, 2019,

[https://cst.org.uk/data/file/3/d/IR\\_Jan-Jun\\_2019.1564410415.pdf](https://cst.org.uk/data/file/3/d/IR_Jan-Jun_2019.1564410415.pdf)

Misogyny and Antisemitism, Antisemitism Policy Trust, 2018,

<https://www.antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/5982-Misogyny-and-Antisemitism-Briefing-April-2019-v1.pdf>

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