Antisemitic Attacks in New York Are at Highest Level in Decades

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By Liam Stack

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/26/nyregion/antisemitic-attacks-new-york.html>

Orthodox Jews assaulted on busy streets in Midtown Manhattan and in quiet neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Swastikas drawn on a Long Island home and spray painted onto Wall Street’s Charging Bull statue. A bomb threat against a Jewish community center in Albany, and fliers in Dutchess County that warned residents, “Jews want to take your guns.”

The number of antisemitic incidents in New York increased by 24 percent last year to the highest level in decades, including a surge in the number of assaults, as well as both criminal and noncriminal incidents targeting Jews, [according to an annual report](https://www.adl.org/audit2021w) released on Tuesday by the Anti-Defamation League.

The group said it counted 416 antisemitic incidents across the state, including 51 assaults, the most physical attacks it has recorded since it began compiling such data in 1979. The report was based on information collected from local law enforcement agencies and Jewish community leaders and individuals.

The surge was part of a nationwide trend that saw 2,717 antisemitic incidents across the United States, including 88 assaults, an increase of 167 percent from the year before. That violence came after a yearslong string of antisemitic killings, including in Pittsburgh; Poway, Calif.; and Jersey City that have left the Jewish community on edge.

“This is the largest total we have ever seen,” said Jonathan Greenblatt, the chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League. “We had Jews beaten and brutalized in broad daylight in Midtown Manhattan, in Brooklyn, in the Diamond District. What was remarkable about it was people acted with impunity. These were Jewish people wearing a kipa or who were visibly Orthodox being assaulted for being Jews, and that is brand-new.”

The report focused on several high-profile incidents that took place during or shortly after Israel’s conflict with Hamas militants in Gaza last May, which [killed at least 230 Palestinians and 12 Israelis.](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-ceasefire.html)

The conflict prompted a wave of antisemitic incidents across the United States, including violent clashes between pro-Israel and pro-Palestine protesters in and around Times Square.

[More than two dozen people were arrested](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/21/nyregion/times-square-protest-diamond-district.html) during the street fighting, and at least two were injured, including one man who was shoved into a window and another person injured by a firework thrown into a crowd.

The fighting in Gaza also spurred unusually intense political squabbles, which spilled into public view.

[In one high profile case](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/12/nyregion/andrew-yang-israel-palestine-attack.html), Andrew Yang, who was running for mayor of New York City, walked back a statement of support for “the people of Israel” after a voter confronted him over it at a campaign stop in Queens, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York condemned his remarks as “[utterly shameful](https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1392220241472720897).”

Mr. Greenblatt said he thought extremist views bore some responsibility for the increased number of incidents targeting Jews.

“When people make wild unhinged claims you shouldn’t be surprised when other people commit wild unhinged acts,” he said. “We have seen this happen to the Latino community, when there was a wave of scapegoating around immigration policy, we have seen this happen to the Asian community when there was scapegoating Covid-19.”

“Now we are seeing it with the Jewish community,” he added. “You can have strong feelings about the Middle East but that’s not an excuse to victimize Jewish people.”

Well over half the 51 assaults recorded in New York took place in Brooklyn, where 34 antisemitic attacks were recorded last year, most of them against people [wearing traditional religious garb](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/17/nyregion/hasidic-jewish-attacks.amp.html) that identified them as Orthodox Jews, such as skullcaps, black suits or long beards and sidelocks.

According to the report, the victims in Brooklyn included several Jews punched or slapped in the face, including a three-year old; an Orthodox woman whose wig was ripped off her head and thrown onto the ground; and a group of Hasidic males, ages 11 to 82, who were struck by a driver who backed a minivan into them.

In addition to the assaults, the report also recorded 183 incidents of harassment in New York, along with 182 vandalism cases and 161 incidents involving swastikas. It also said there was a 41 percent increase in reported incidents at Jewish institutions, which were targeted 62 times last year in New York.