Holocaust Memorials Defaced in Belgium, Germany as Antisemitism Continues to Spike in Europe

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Holocaust memorials in Belgium and Germany were defaced this week, as [antisemitism continued to skyrocket](https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/06/03/european-rabbi-says-israel-must-develop-contingency-plan-europes-jews-antisemitism-spreads/) to record levels in Europe following the Hamas terror group’s Oct. 7 massacre across southern Israel.

In Brussels — the capital of Belgium and the seat of the European Union — a memorial for Nazi resistance fighters at park Bois de le Cambre was defaced with a white swastika and Celtic cross, a symbol often used by neo-Nazis.

The memorial was dedicated last year to Belgium resistance fighters Youra Livchitz, Jean Franklemon, and Robert Maistriau. During World War II, the trio [managed to stop](https://www.buchenwald.de/en/geschichte/biografien/bag-ausstellung/robert-maistriau) a Nazi train carrying Jews from Belgium to Auschwitz. In the ensuing chaos, roughly 200 Jews were able to escape.

Meanwhile a Holocaust memorial dedicated to the people of Belgium on the walls of Mont des Arts Square in downtown Brussels was targeted by anti-Israel graffiti calling for violence against Jews. ‘Escalate, for we are all equal! Palestine, everyone!’ the message read.

Eitan Bergman, secretary-general of Belgium’s Jewish community organization CCOJB, tweeted in response to the graffiti incidents, ‘Whether you are Jewish or their saviors, for these fools you are guilty. Sad, scary.’

Germany too has fallen victim to the [uptick in antisemitic incidents](https://www.algemeiner.com/2023/11/28/horrifying-germany-registers-29-antisemitic-incidents-per-day-since-hamas-pogrom-in-israel/) since Oct. 7. In Weimar, at least seven *stolpersteine*, or stumbling blocks in the sidewalk meant to mark Jewish homes seized by the Nazis, were defaced with the message ‘Jews are perpetrators.’

According to the European Jewish Congress (EJC), an organization representing European Jewry, the disturbing phrase was also used in a graffiti incident at Germany’s Achava Festival and on other Holocaust memorials. Police are investigating whether there is a connection to the latest incident in Weimar.

‘This shameful act of disrespect towards Shoah victims must be unequivocally condemned and those responsible held accountable,’ the EJC posted on X/Twitter in response to the desecration of Weimar’s *stolpersteine*.

The incidents came after a [Holocaust memorial in Paris was defaced](https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/05/14/paris-holocaust-memorial-vandalized-blood-red-handprints-anniversary-nazi-roundup/) last month with painted blood-red hands in what French authorities and Jewish leaders described as a ‘hateful rallying cry against Jews.’

Europe has experienced an explosion of antisemitic incidents in the wake of the Hamas atrocities of Oct. 7, and amid the ensuing war in Gaza. In many countries, anti-Jewish hate crimes have spiked to record levels.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), police registered 5,154 antisemitic incidents in Germany last year, a 95 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Notably, Brussels has witnessed several troubling antisemitic incidents. In April, for example, the home of a Belgian Holocaust survivor was [spray-painted with the words](https://x.com/ccojb/status/1775081122482761897) ’Gaza Free’ and a swastika. Last month, a 64-year-old Israel tourist [was attacked](https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/05/17/israeli-tourist-attacked-mob-belgium-suffers-broken-jaw/) by a mob in the Belgian city of Bruges and suffered a broken jaw after he and his daughter removed an anti-Israel sticker in a train station.