UK Jews document record high 2,000 antisemitic incidents in first half of 2024

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-jews-document-record-high-2000-antisemitic-incidents-in-first-half-of-2024/>

British Jews documented nearly 2,000 antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2024, the highest-ever tally for a six-month period that marked a 100 percent increase over the same time span last year.

The 1,978 incidents recorded by the Community Security Trust are part of a sharp rise in hate and hate crimes against Jews following the Hamas-led October 7 attack that sparked the war in Gaza and the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel, the communal watchdog group wrote in its semiannual report published Thursday.

The report’s release coincided with a series of riots in recent days across the United Kingdom that Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said featured ‘wanton violence alongside racist rhetoric’ against Muslims and other minority communities.

The riots, which erupted after the period covered in the CST report, began following the murder of three girls in Southport. Police suspect the killer was a 17-year-old boy of Rwandan descent. The incident led to expressions of deep-seated anti-immigration sentiments fueled by the illegal immigration of tens of thousands of people each year, alongside the legal immigration of hundreds of thousands more, many of them from the Middle East and Africa.

‘There are some people in this movement and their online spaces encouraging others to consider Jews as a target,’ a CST spokesperson told the Guardian newspaper.

According to CST, most perpetrators of antisemitic incidents were likely ‘motivated to act in response to the conflict in the Middle East.’ That motivation is likelier to drive people of Muslim or Middle Eastern descent to act against Jews than white ultranationalists.

Anti-Israel rallies, including ones that feature antisemitic rhetoric, have become frequent and turbulent in the UK since October 7.

Of the incidents documented in the CST report, a description of the perpetrator’s appearance existed only in 624 cases. Of those, 42% were described as white. The remaining 58% were divided among people who looked Middle Eastern (30%); South Asian (14%); Black (12%) and miscellaneous.

CST recorded 121 assaults during the first half of 2024, an increase of 41% from the 86 such incidents in the first six months of 2023. Some 86 acts of vandalism were recorded, CST said. The remaining incidents were categorized as ‘abusive behavior’ (1,618 cases) and threats (142). Antisemitic literature featured in only 13 cases recorded in the report. The number of online incidents recorded was 630.

In one violent assault recorded, three Middle Eastern-looking men hurled glass bottles at four Israelis who were speaking Hebrew to each other in London. One perpetrator shouted ‘F\*ck Jews, Hamas is the best’ before one of the men punched an Israeli woman in the neck. One person was arrested in connection with the assault.

‘There is no place in Britain for this vile hatred and we are absolutely clear that those who push this poison — on the streets or online — must always face the full force of the law,’ Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said in a statement on the report.