



Executive Council of Australian Jewry
הוועד הפועל של יהודי אוסטרליה

MEDIA RELEASE

ECAJ annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia

25 November 2018

The 12 month period ending 30 September 2018 saw a 59% increase over the previous year in total antisemitic incidents in Australia involving threats or acts of violence, according to the annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia published by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ).

The ECAJ, Jewish community roof bodies in each State, and other Jewish community groups logged a total of 366 antisemitic incidents during the period, including physical assaults, abuse and harassment, vandalism, graffiti, hate and threats communicated directly by email, letters, telephone calls, posters, stickers and leaflets. This compares to a total of 230 such incidents logged by the same sources over the preceding 12 month period, an overall increase of 136 incidents.

In the latest 12 month period, there were 156 attacks (assault, abuse, vandalism, and graffiti), accounting for 43% of the total number of incidents. There were 210 threats (email, letters, telephone, leaflets, posters and stickers), accounting for 57% of the total number of incidents. There is also much anecdotal evidence of incidents which go unreported.

Overall, between 2017 and 2018 the number of ‘attacks’ increased slightly (from 145 to 156), while the number of ‘threats’ increased by 147% (from 85 to 210). There was a marked increase in antisemitic abuse, vandalism, and threats via email, telephone, posters and stickers; a decrease in graffiti and threats by postal mail; while the number of physical assaults remained the same.

One group, Antipodean Resistance, which has an overtly neo-Nazi ideology, was responsible for 133 (36%) of the year’s total of 366 incidents, mostly consisting of placing posters, stickers, graffiti and murals, and one incident of vandalism, in public places. The total number of incidents attributable to Antipodean Resistance rose from 50 in the previous year, a rise of 166%. It thus accounted for 83 of the additional 136 incidents compared to the previous year. However, the activities of Antipodean Resistance do not account for the significant increase in recorded incidents of verbal abuse/harassment and vandalism.

The ECAJ’s Research Officer, Julie Nathan, who authored the report, said “The evidence points clearly to a sharp increase in the number of antisemitic incidents in Australia. Jews continue to be verbally abused and harassed around synagogues on a regular basis, as well as on the streets in suburban areas.”

“The most noticeable change over the last twelve months in Australia has been the significant increase in neo-Nazi activity, predominantly by Antipodean Resistance. Members of Antipodean Resistance have put up thousands of Nazi stickers and anti-Jewish, anti-homosexual and pro-Nazi posters, especially at universities, high schools, and other places visible to the public. Antipodean Resistance has explicitly promoted violence and murder, calling to “Legalise the execution of Jews”. It has also called for the killing of homosexuals. Its posters graphically depict and incite the use of firearms to shoot Jews and homosexuals in the head. Antipodean Resistance is a serious threat to the safety and security of Jews, homosexuals, non-white immigrants and ultimately to the entire community,” Nathan said.

Although Australia overall remains a stable, vibrant and tolerant democracy, where Jews face no official discrimination, and are free to observe their faith and traditions, antisemitism persists. There has been an increase in the activities of groups which are not only hostile towards Jews, but actively and publicly express that hatred with words and threatened or actual violent acts. As a result, and by necessity, physical security remains a prime concern for the Jewish community.

Nathan said “The Jewish community is the only community within Australia whose places of worship, schools, communal organisations and community centres need, for security reasons, to operate under the protection of high fences, armed guards, metal detectors, CCTV cameras and the like. The necessity is recognised by Australia's law enforcement agencies and arises from the entrenched and protean nature of antisemitism in western and Muslim culture, resulting in a high incidence of physical attacks against Jews and Jewish communal buildings over the last three decades, and continuing threats.”

As the political far right increasingly becomes emboldened and more active, and as far right groups publicly denigrate, demonise and incite violence against Jews, among others, it is incumbent upon political and other leaders to demonstrate that antisemitism, and all other forms of racism, are totally unacceptable in Australia, and to ensure that policies, laws and other measures are adopted and implemented in order to effectively counter their effects.

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