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# Report on Antisemitism 2022 – Summary

**During the reporting year, the SIG recorded 57 antisemitic incidents in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland (not including online incidents). This represents a slight increase from the previous year (2021: 53). They included one physical assault, 16 cases of verbal abuse and nine cases of offensive graffiti. 853 incidents were recorded online, primarily on social media and in the comment sections of media outlets (an increase of around 6%). In total, this amounted to 910 incidents reported and observed within the examination period (2021: 859).**

The recorded incidents (real world and online) were divided into four categories: general antisemitism (308 incidents), Shoah denial or trivialization (46), antisemitism related to Israel (58) and current antisemitic conspiracy theories (498).

In previous years, antisemitic incidents often occurred due to “triggers”. Triggers are international or national events, including media reports, that cause a spike in the number of antisemitic incidents for a limited period (usually a few days). This has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the monitoring of Telegram groups. There have been and currently are two long-term triggers that directly or indirectly produce incidents of antisemitism on an ongoing basis: Covid and the war in Ukraine. This has also further increased the proportion of current antisemitic conspiracy theories among the total of online

incidents. They accounted for 51% of online incidents in 2021, which increased to 57% in 2022.

The lion’s share of observed and reported incidents came from the Telegram messenger service (75%), representing a huge increase compared with 2021 (61%). The short message service Twitter now accounts for only 17% (2021: 28%). The figure from Facebook (5.5%) has remained roughly the same and the comments sections of online media outlets have become almost irrelevant (1.7%). One reason for this is that almost no comments on Telegram are deleted, even if they contain hate speech. Another is that in Switzerland, as in other countries, an anti-state, anti-society and conspiracy-loving subculture has developed which communicates predominantly via Telegram. Many conspiracy theories with antisemitic content are shared in this environment

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, an active scene has developed in Switzerland which refuses to accept measures to contain the pandemic. In previous Reports on Antisemitism, they were referred to as “corona rebels”. However, many of its members were concerned with more than just the Covid measures from the start. They advocated and disseminated a wide range of conspiracy theories of various topics. With the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, elements of Russian propaganda were incorporated, and the priority also shifted from Covid to Ukraine. However, these



individuals were not focussing on a new topic because they needed a replacement after Covid measures were lifted. In their minds, issues such as Covid, the war in Ukraine, etc. and the theories associated with them are interrelated. Simply put, it is a great battle of good versus evil. On one side, there are paedophile Satanists who want to oppress the world and reduce the population. On the other side are God-fearing men like Trump and Putin who fight for freedom and the protection of children.

Antisemitic incidents in the Telegram groups studied – all of which belong to this new subculture – have increased steadily over the past three years. The proportion of incidents in the Telegram groups among the total number of online incidents has also increased massively. While they accounted for 61% in 2021, they have risen to 75% in 2022. The absolute number of Telegram incidents also increased steadily and significantly: from 135 in 2020 to 445 in 2021 and finally 640 last year.

Not all people in this scene have antisemitic prejudices or are decidedly antisemitic. However, it is striking that, in contrast to the previous two years, antisemitic posts now go practically unopposed – even in cases of overt antisemitism. This may be because antisemitism has actually gained majority support in this scene. On the other hand, the limits of freedom of expression are extremely broad for these people, and also include hate speech.

The most serious incidents in 2022 were:

- In February, four young people threw a full pot of yoghurt at the back of a Jewish man (wearing a kippah) in Zurich.
- In February, a man saw a Jewish woman on the street in Zurich, spat on the floor, then performed the Hitler salute and shouted: “You f\*cking Jew”. Then he spat on the floor again and walked away.

- In April, Jewish guests at a hotel in Davos, identifiable as devoutly religious by their clothing, were in front of the hotel entrance on the evening after Shabbat. A group of about six young men passed by and shouted “Heil Hitler” and “The Jews belong in the gas chamber”.
- In June, a pupil said to a Jewish fellow pupil at a school in the canton of Zurich: “Hitler should have killed all Jews”. Hitler and swastika pictures were also often posted in the class chat.

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