Argentina sees 107% spike in antisemitism

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<https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Argentina-sees-107-percent-spike-in-antisemitism-603445>

The number of antisemitic incidents in [Argentina](http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism/Argentina-freezes-Hezbollah-assets-brands-group-terrorist-organization-596086) rose in 2018 by 107% in comparison with 2017.

According to a report by the DAIA, the country’s Jewish community umbrella organization, there were 834 acts of [antisemitism](http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism) in 2018 compared with 404 incidents reported in 2017.

The statistics and research were presented in Buenos Aires on Wednesday by the DAIA and its Bureau of Complaints, which receives information on antisemitic incidents and analyzes them.

According to the report, 68% of the incidents took place in Buenos Aires, with 32% of incidents taking place in other parts of the country. Of the 834 incidents reported, the DAIA said that 71% occurred online – mostly on websites – with 17% of this figure appearing on social media platforms.
The report found that 27% of the antisemitic content online had xenophobic connotations against Jews, 18% were fueled by events taking place in the Middle East, 17% used Nazi symbolism, while others drew from conspiracies about Jewish world domination and other related misconceptions.

“The increase in antisemitic messages is a phenomenon that had been taking place in Argentina for a long time,” said DAIA president Jorge Knoblovits. “A new element [of antisemitism] was observed in the last year in which there were personal attacks on referents of the Jewish community like the rabbi of Rosario, or what happened in Buenos Aires with an aggression toward people who were wearing kippot, which has been seen [before] in Europe, but not in Argentina.”

Knoblovits said that this report “once again shows strong and worrying data: in our country during 2018 the antisemitic messages on the Internet have multiplied. In recent years, it was found that social media is the best place to spread these discourses. That is why we must work to introduce an urgent debate about the role of social networks and technology companies as vehicles for violent messages.”

Complaints of antisemitism can be filed through the DAIA’s website as well as through a cell phone application.

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) initiated research on social perceptions about Jews in Argentina, which was also presented by the Gino Germani Institute at Wednesday’s event.

The survey included 1,443 people polled on a national level, with participants between 18 and 65.
The research found that 53% of respondents believe that there is discrimination against Jews, while 87% did not know, or had misconceptions, about what Zionism is.

A concerning statistic found that 61% agreed with the antisemitic prejudice of the “influence” of Jews in international markets, and 47% believed that the Jews are the first to turn their backs on people in need.

The information for the poll was gathered between June and July.

“The data is very worrying and reminiscent of utterances made about the Jews in the late 1930s in Nazi Germany,” WZO vice chairman Yaakov Hagoel told The Jerusalem Post. “The Argentine authorities should act immediately and allow Jews living in their country to live a peaceful life.”

He said that the general aim of the study was to assess the attitude toward Jews within the Argentine population.

“Studies of this kind are significant and relevant because the Jewish issue in Argentina accompanies much of its history,” Hagoel said. “This population has actively participated in the social sphere, as well as in the fields of production, work, culture, science and politics. In addition, the waves of immigration that reached Argentina during the last decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century have made Argentina’s Jewish population the third largest in the world.”

According to Hagoel, the study also indicates that the respondents “believe that the Jews take advantage of those in their favor, that the Jews hold too much power in the international financial markets, and therefore, that the government must better control the economic power held by many Jews. As mentioned, these sentences remind us of dark periods in the history of the Jewish people.”

From another perspective, the research – which was mostly conducted among non-Jews – shows that “more than 90% of those surveyed believe that Jews suffered in the Holocaust and are not exaggerating when talking about it.”

Hagoel said that the results of the study “should light warning signals for the Argentine authorities. The Argentine government needs to strengthen the values against xenophobia in the education system and enact laws to combat antisemitism.”

The DAIA’s annual antisemitism report was conducted together with the Gino Germani Institute, which belongs to the Social Science Faculty and the Center for Social Studies at the University of Buenos Aires.

This year marks 20 years since the annual reports have been published by the Jewish body, which established the practice in 1998.

The panel presenting both sets of research included president of the Argentine Episcopal Conference and Bishop of San Isidro Monsignor Oscar Ojea; the president of the DAIA Knoblovits; Nestor Cohen, who led the research of the Gino Germani Institute; the director of the Center for Social Studies, Marisa Braylan; and one of the leading researchers, Verónica Constantino.