

Toronto Antisemitism

Country-wide, hate crimes are most prevalent in our large metropolitan centres, where populations are more dense and diverse, such as Toronto, Calgary, and Montreal. Over the years, centres have responded with the creation of special hate crime units to varying degrees.

Civil society must respond to the needs of its community; Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has diligently constructed a series of antisemitism and anti-racism workshops, primarily directed towards youth and student groups as well as the teachers who help mould our future generations.

With our main office in Toronto, we pay close attention to incidents occurring in our own neighbourhoods and act accordingly via outreach and specialized programming. There has been an increased activity in reported hate crimes since 2000. The following information is a sample of police-reported hate crimes from the past 10 years in Toronto:

2010

January:

A freelance reporter receives an email telling her to "stop working for the kikes" if she wants to be credible.

February:

A patient posts antisemitic comments about his doctor on the Internet.

A call is made to a Jewish organization, telling Jewish "rats" to leave the country if they "can't take the heat".

An antisemitic book is sent to a Jewish home in Mississauga.

March:

Objects are thrown from a passing vehicle at a religious family heading home on the Sabbath.

A mezuzah is ripped off of a home and left smashed on the ground.

A former York University student who is being sought by police for his antisemitic website, filthyjewishterrorist.com, blames his troubles with the law on "Jewish Kikes".

April:

A Jewish community building receives a bomb threat.

A disparaging letter about a Jewish resident is circulated throughout a condominium.

June:

An elementary school student is bullied and taunted with antisemitic comments.

An apartment building that is home to many Jewish senior citizens has its stairwell defaced with a swastika and the words: "Die Jews".

July:

A Jewish resident's mailbox is defaced with swastikas and illustrations of pigs. The family's car is later vandalized.

August:

Vandals deface the garage door of a Jewish home with a swastika and the word "Golda"

October:

A York University professor accuses the Jewish student group Hillel of being an agent of a foreign government.

A poison pen letter "to revenge the Zionist entity" is mailed to synagogues and Jewish organizations.

Antisemitic remarks are made by students at a Catholic high school.

November:

Graffiti is found in a subway station that reads "say no to Jewish control", with a swastika carved beside it.

A personality on the pilot episode of the reality TV show "Lakeshore" makes antisemitic remarks.

December:

A new conspiracy theory is circulated, blaming Jews for the Wikileaks scandal.
A resident of Mississauga gives advice on an antisemitic website on how to identify a Jew by name in a Nazi-like roundup.

2009**January:**

Chants at an anti-Israel street rally include "Jews are our dogs", and "Jewish child, you're gonna f**kin' die. Hamas is coming for you."

A thirteen year-old student is assaulted by a group of students as they shout references to Jews smelling like ashes [a reference to the concentration camp crematoria] and make the Heil Hitler salute.

February:

A business owner's storefront is defaced, and he is sent a letter threatening "to blow [the] heads off [the] Jewish congregation".

Jewish students on campus fear for their own safety, as they are swarmed by other students who shout antisemitic slurs and death threats.

March:

A Jewish university student challenging a point at a debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is told to "shut up or I'll saw your head off", and then dragged out of the room.

April:

A playground is defaced with the words "Jew free zone", "Jews are not welcome" and Nazi symbols. Mezuzahs on Jewish homes in Thornhill are defaced during the Jewish religious holiday of Passover.

May:

A driver gestures to a father and two young children wearing kippahs in the next car, signalling that he wants to slit their throats.

Emails are circulated in a workplace, blaming Jews for creating swine flu as a method of destroying the world.

June:

The British pop singer Adele, on tour in Canada, assures her audience during a rant about a shopkeeper who was rude to her: "don't worry, he wasn't Canadian, he was Jewish".

July:

Antisemitic slurs and threats are shouted at a community-based baseball game.

Swastikas and Hitler images are spray-painted onto playground equipment.

A Jew receives a call to his cell phone in which the caller threatens "to slit Jewish throats".

August:

The apartment doors of three Jewish residents are defaced with "Hate Jewish swine", and mezuzahs are ripped off.

A Thornhill synagogue's interior is defaced with antisemitic slurs.

October:

Online propaganda is found declaring: "Kikes are the maggots of the human race! The sooner the kike plague is destroyed the better! It will be a GREAT day when the last kike vampire breathes its last foul breath and dies!"

November:

Antisemitic remarks that call Jews murderers who are pushing Canada to war are written on cards that are being sent to thank Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

December:

A Jewish reporter is spat on while covering an anti-Israel rally.

2008

January:

A dispute between two businessmen, one of them Jewish, ends with antisemitic slurs and an assault against the Jew.

Chants at a rally against anti-Black graffiti at a university campus degenerate into antisemitic rants.

February:

Debate at a public school board about a proposed Afro-centric school turns into antisemitic rants against trustees who did not support the proposal, one of whom is Jewish.

April:

A government health worker is called a "Christ Killer" by her supervisor.

An email in Russian repeats an age-old blood libel, warning Thornhill residents to watch over their children lest they be kidnapped by Jews who will, it is alleged, use the infants' blood to make *matzos* (unleavened bread) for Passover.

May:

A synagogue renting space in a public school facility is vandalized by local teens, following several weeks of intentional disturbances during services.

A Jewish organization receives mail blaming Jews for the removal of the Lord's Prayer from the daily proceedings in the provincial government, as part of an alleged conspiracy to wipe out Christianity.

June:

A Jewish high school student is sent antisemitic threats on Facebook.

July:

A Mississauga park is defaced with antisemitic graffiti, including the signature "Hitler youth".

August:

A Toronto newspaper designed to assist the homeless contains antisemitic articles.

Blogs blame Jews for the propane blast that rocks the Downsview area of the city.

September:

A mezuzah is torn down from a house, and smashed into pieces.

A Jewish judge is sent an antisemitic letter.

Worshippers are threatened and harassed as they walk home from Saturday morning services at their local synagogue.

October:

A trailer on the property of a Jewish day school is defaced with antisemitic graffiti, including KKK signs and the wording: "I love Hitler".

November:

Antisemitic slurs are posted on a mosque website.

The epithet "Heil Hitler" is found on a community centre in a predominantly Jewish area.

December:

An email is circulated in the workplace calling for a boycott against Jews.

2007**January:**

The words "Kill Jews" are scrawled on the walls of a public school.

February:

A bomb threat is made to an individual at his home.

March:

A clerk refuses to serve a Jewish customer at a retail food store.

An individual receives an anonymous call on his cell phone stating: "if you're Jewish, you belong in the oven".

A young religious student is assaulted as he leaves his Jewish day school at the end of the day.

May:

A campus student group invites an American speaker known for his antisemitic and pro-violence views.

June:

A Rabbi is assaulted on a public street in broad daylight.

Antisemitic graffiti defaces many private properties in Mississauga as part of an overnight crime spree.

A visibly religious student is swarmed and attacked by a gang on the way home from school.

August:

Visibly Jewish students are assaulted on the way home from school.

October:

Private homes, including the home of Holocaust survivors, are defaced with antisemitic graffiti.

December:

Mezuzahs placed on residents' doors in a large apartment complex are defaced and torn off the doorposts.

A Rabbi receives an email containing anti-Jewish epitaphs that repeat material from a white supremacist website.

2006**January:**

During "Israel Apartheid Week" on campus, an invited speaker alleges that Jews are killers who use their wealth to control the world.

Two boys parade through the Jewish community waving a Nazi flag from their car.

A social worker gives a Heil Hitler salute and complains to a colleague: "all Jews must die".

A community college teacher tells her students that the media is under the control of the Jews and that the Holocaust was fabricated by the media.

February:

A school principal singles out and harasses the two Jewish teachers who work at his school.

A child is bullied at his Richmond Hill school and taunted about this Jewishness.

March:

A swastika and the message "gas the Jews" is etched inside a downtown facility.

The Holocaust memorial site at Earl Bales Park is vandalized and defaced with graffiti twice over a three-day period.

The entrance of an apartment is vandalized and painted with swastikas and hateful slogans.

April:

A supporter of white supremacist Tomasz Winnicki addressed a message to B'nai Brith: "why don't you dumb-f**k kikes leave this guy alone? Besides you hook-nosers aren't even real Jews. You're just a bunch of Khazers".

May:

A mental health patient is harassed by a nurse and labeled a "bad Jew".

A Jewish woman living in a social housing project is harassed by her neighbours who carve swastikas onto her front door and make anti-Jewish slurs.

June:

A Jew driving downtown is physically assaulted by the driver of another car, who hurls a bottle at him, spitting and shouting that a "pig-nose Jew should not be driving," and threatening that he will "kill you like my grandparents killed yours".

A hate rock festival promotes anti-Jewish and anti-Black propaganda.

July:

"Death to Jews" is scrawled on a street sign in the North York area.

A "Call to Arms" from a white supremacist group is circulated via e-mail calling for violence against the Jewish community.

August:

Two men strike a visibly Jewish man and knock off his kippah before walking away. A rabbi is attacked and accused of "wanting to start wars".

September:

A synagogue in North Toronto receives threats by mail.

October:

Organizers at a major downtown venue receive death threats against a Jewish performer days before her appearance in a concert.

A Holocaust survivor who uses a transportation service designed for handicapped users overhears the driver making Holocaust denial remarks.

November:

The elevator of a downtown building is repeatedly defaced with the words "Jew Killers" and swastikas.

December:

A hotel receives a message from a caller threatening "to kill all the Jews." The caller inquires "how many Jews do you have?"

A menorah display in a Jewish neighbourhood is vandalized.

A young man is repeatedly taunted with the slur, "Jew boy," as he walks along the sidewalk.

2005**January:**

A student at a community college made death threats against a Jewish student.

An elderly Jewish man found a swastika carved into his car in Thornhill.

A public high school student yelled "f**k the Jews" at another student.

"Jews all dead" was scrawled on the door of a Jewish family's apartment.

February:

A visibly Orthodox Jewish teenager was threatened by gang members while bystanders stood by.

A patient called his dentist a "bastard Jew" when presented with an outstanding bill.

March:

"Jews burn to Hell" was painted on a private home.

April:

Congregants were repeatedly harassed during Sabbath prayer services.

Students at an exclusive high school created an antisemitic website and sent hate-filled emails to Jewish students who dared to complain.

B'nai Brith's staff were threatened: "Jews are annoying as wasps. Everyone knows what you do with wasps. You find their nests and smoke them out."

May:

Death threats were made against a B'nai Brith Canada professional.

June:

A bomb threat was directed at a synagogue.

In a targeted campaign, white supremacist material was distributed to Jewish homes.

A customs officer made antisemitic comments to a Jew returning from holiday in Israel.

July:

A caller to B'nai Brith Canada expressed hate against all Jews and threatened to attack staff members.

August:

Jewish community signs were defaced with antisemitic graffiti.

A store front serving as a synagogue, mini community centre and nursery school was defaced with swastikas and Nazi SS insignia.

September:

An employee was refused unpaid leave for High Holiday observance by a supervisor who complained this request showed that "Jews are so demanding".

November:

A synagogue was defaced with swastikas.

Neo-Nazi antisemitic pamphlets alleging "Jewish Supremacism Unmasked" were found on numerous university campuses.

A visibly Jewish teenager was egged at a bus stop.

December:

Calls to a candidate's campaign office demanded Jews be barred from holding public office.

2004**January:**

A two-metre high swastika was painted on a building housing the offices of a Jewish organization. Antisemitic remarks were made during a student council meeting at York University following a heavily contested election in which Jewish candidates were successful.

February:

Text messages were sent to many Jews stating: "Hi just wanted to say White Power! To all you Christ-murdering Jews".

Messages blaming Jews for the death of Jesus were found spray painted opposite a building for Jewish seniors and on a private residence.

Antisemitic messaging was placed on a university website forum operated by a professor for his course: "you're a f**king Jew...that's enough to be ashamed forever...all you guys ever do is complain about how you are Jews...you should just f**king kill yourselves because if I was born a Jew I'd hate myself...six million people died in the Nazi concentration camps without even fighting back".

March:

A Jewish man was assaulted by the occupants of a passing vehicle.

An antisemitic weekend spree of vandalism included graffiti and the overturning of 27 gravestones.

Antisemitic/neo-Nazi graffiti was scrawled at a university campus.

Homes and cars in a heavily Jewish neighbourhood were defaced with antisemitic graffiti, including swastikas and slurs.

A senior citizen was harassed on a public transit bus and told: "your son should be in Dachau".

Antisemitic flyers and ads were inserted into Thornhill ethnic newspapers and distributed.

April:

Flyers were distributed suggesting that "the end" is coming, with calls to "slay and kill all Jews, Blacks, Asians, Latinos and homosexuals" as "true sinners".

Election signs of Jewish federal candidates were defaced with swastikas.

A restaurant patron swore at a Jewish girl sitting nearby, shouting: "you f**king Jewish murderers".

Phone calls threatening physical violence were made to Jewish homes.

June:

A Jewish public transit driver was threatened by a passenger and told: "Hitler was right about the Jews".

A Jewish home was defaced with a three-foot high swastika and the epitaph RIP (Rest in Peace)

July:

Antisemitic remarks were made by customs officer at Pearson International Airport to a passenger returning from a visit to Israel, including the statement: "all Jews are rich".

August:

Antisemitic graffiti was spray-painted at a downtown university campus.

September:

"Die Jew" was etched into a car on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur while it was parked outside of

the owner's home.

October:

A threatening email was received by a Jewish organization saying: "Jews should keep their big noses out of things or have them cut off".

Objects were hurled at Jews leaving a local synagogue after evening prayer services.

A Thornhill synagogue was defaced with crosses.

A Minister on a local television station alleged there was a "Jewish plot for world control".

November:

Articles appeared in the Hungarian-language ethnic press denying the Holocaust and denigrating the Jewish community.

A Jewish organization received a telephone call warning of a bomb threat against "Jewish interests" in the Toronto area.

December:

Hate messages were spray-painted on a bridge to a busy Jewish Community Centre, including "death to Jews" and a depiction of a noose with a Jewish star on it.

2003

January:

Swastikas were painted on the individual apartment doors of a condominium building with a large Jewish population, many of them elderly Holocaust survivors.

A Jewish university student received a telephone threat in which the caller said he would kill Jews and cause another Holocaust.

A skinhead rock performance featured antisemitic and racist songs.

A brick was thrown through the window of a private residence, accompanied by an antisemitic and threatening note.

An ethnic newspaper containing antisemitic articles alleged Jewish control of the government and a plot by B'nai Brith to control the world.

February:

Threatening remarks were made to a Jew wearing a yarmulka who was accompanying his young child to the park in Thornhill, such as: "I'm sick of what you Jews are doing".

A Polish translation of the antisemitic Czarist forgery, *The Protocols of Elders of Zion*, was found in a bookstore and the owner refused to remove it.

Antisemitic remarks were made by a university professor alleging that Jews use the Holocaust as an excuse to escape criticism, and that the Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus.

A visibly Orthodox man was viciously attacked with a hammer on the way home from synagogue.

March:

A Girl Scout troop, which included Jewish children, was told by a church Minister that Jews were responsible for the suffering of mankind.

Hate mail with antisemitic and racist comments was received by the executive director of a Jewish organization at his Thornhill home.

An elderly Jewish woman was pushed and threatened by two teenage girls while at a local Laundromat. They called her a "Zionist filthy pig".

University students identifiable as Jews were attacked physically by anti-war activists.

A Jewish high school student was threatened from a passing car, including remarks such as: "I can tell you're a Jew because you look so stupid."

April:

Bomb threats against synagogues were called into police headquarters.

Ongoing threatening calls to businesses owned by Jews were referred to as f**king pigs of Zion and the root of all evil.

May:

Threatening letters were sent to a Holocaust remembrance organization, containing swastikas and derogatory remarks about Jews.

June:

A swastika was painted onto a real estate sign of a house owned by Jews.
A swastika was carved into a synagogue's main outdoor sign.
Antisemitic and racist graffiti were found on a private golf course in Richmond Hill.
A man was charged with criminal harassment and making racially based death threats after threatening phone calls to a Jewish individual.

August:

Numerous hate calls were made to a synagogue.
Windows were smashed at a Jewish bookstore, and antisemitic graffiti was found at the scene.

September:

A teenage girl was harassed on a public transit bus.
Antisemitic remarks were hand-written on *Jews for Jesus* flyers and dropped at private homes displaying mezuzahs.

October:

A Sukkah built by a Jewish student group on campus was destroyed repeatedly.

November:

A series of antisemitic bullying episodes at a local public school targeting a Jewish student culminated in a physical assault against the victim.
Antisemitic emails containing death threats were sent to a female high school student.
Death threats were made against a staff member of a Jewish organization.
A university student newspaper printed antisemitic comments beneath an article by a Jewish student, containing the wording: "Shut the f**k up you stupid greedy Jew."

December:

Antisemitic heckling culminated in the assault of a Jewish student during a demonstration in support of an anti-Israel student conference planned for university premises.
A visibly Jewish high school teen was harassed and threatened on the subway by a gang of older teens.

2002

January:

Material sent out by a Jewish organization was returned, defaced with swastikas.

February:

A synagogue was defaced with a Star of David with the word "devil" marked on it.

March:

A physician, who found himself in the midst of a downtown demonstration by pro-Palestinian protesters, was called a "Jewish murderer", pushed to the ground and his collarbone was broken.

April:

Hate messages were sent to the Jewish community's Tele-Aid distress line, including comments such as, "Death to all you Jewish a**holes. Go back to where you came from"
Intruders entered an apartment building at night, daubed swastikas on doors, and damaged mezuzahs, the traditional religious symbolic scrolls commonly found affixed to the doors of Jewish homes.
A man received a postcard in the mail calling for "Death to the Jews", and threatening him and his family specifically, after he expressed his opinion on CBC radio that Israel has a right to defend itself.
A hate propaganda mailing alleging that non-Jews are unwittingly forced to pay a hidden tax so that Jews can have kosher products was surreptitiously inserted in a local newspaper prior to delivery to area residents. This Kosher Food Tax canard has re-appeared with increasing frequency in recent months and is currently posted on several far Right and far Left websites.

May:

A pharmacy assistant at a national chain drug store in an area with a significant Jewish population gave a Heil Hitler salute to a Jewish customer in front of other shoppers.

June:

The B'nai Brith Canada national office, along with several other Jewish organizations were targeted and received hate mail that included specific threats of violence. Some of these letters included white powder in an apparent intimidation campaign. One of the targeted locales was the Anshei Minsk Synagogue in the downtown area. The letter threatened: "We reserve a singular hatred for the Jew...we will soon be in a position to crush you not just in Israel but worldwide...we outnumber you in every place in which you once felt safe".

There was a bomb threat against a Jewish community centre complex that houses a school and nursery, as well as the offices of several community organizations. Cars were vandalized in a condominium building with a large number of Jewish residents, and antisemitic graffiti and swastikas defaced walls throughout the building.

July:

An orthodox Jewish man was stabbed to death on a public street. The assailant, who did not know the victim, came out of a nearby restaurant after an argument with another Jewish man, made antisemitic comments, ran down the block knife in hand and stabbed the victim in the back. Ongoing antisemitic graffiti was reported in a condominium with predominantly elderly Jewish residents, including many Holocaust survivors.

August:

A death threat was received by the webmaster of a Jewish site via email.

September:

Antisemitic postings were found on the Internet recommending the notorious Czarist forgery *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a true reflection of "Jewish control" in the world today. Headstones were vandalized in a Jewish cemetery. Windows were broken in a synagogue.

October:

A listener called into a Thornhill radio station to state his belief that "Jewish garbage" was responsible for 9/11 tragedy.

November:

A bomb threat was made against a retail business owned by a Jew.

December:

A Jewish family received an antisemitic card inviting the family to "burn in oven". Dog feces were spread over the front window where a Jewish holiday menorah was on display.

2001**February:**

An accountant in Toronto received a request from an individual to apply for the Kosher Tax credit. The Kosher Tax credit is an old antisemitic canard that states the Gentiles are paying for Jews to have kosher food, but can apply for a tax reimbursement.

March:

A bomb threat was issued against the Yad Vashem Wall of Remembrance in Toronto, which commemorates Jewish victims of the Holocaust, stating: "If you continue with the Wall, we will blow it up."

April:

A member of the York Region's Race Relations Advisory Committee reportedly distributed a review of a book titled "Holocaust Industry, Reflections of the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering", which promotes the idea of a Jewish conspiracy to gain power and financial benefit by exploiting the Holocaust. The person is reported to have said: "This one community is controlling the whole system."

June:

40 tombstones were overturned at a cemetery in Toronto

August:

Grffiti found in Toronto contained the words "Kill Kill Kill" and a swastika with "Achtung Juden".

September:

After the World Conference Against Racism in Durban the number of incidents reported increased. Jewish offices in Toronto received hate messages blaming Jews for ruining the conference. After writing a pro-Israel letter that appeared in the Toronto Star, a man received a series of threatening calls saying "Saw your letter in the Star. How dare you f**king Jew. You lousy bastards."

Two synagogues in Toronto were broken into, windows were smashed and cars in the parking lot were vandalized.

A man threatened two Jewish men walking down a Forest Hill street in Toronto. He said he would "kick his f**king head in 'cause he was a Jew."

A bomb threat was directed at a synagogue and a Jewish elementary school in Toronto on September 13

October:

Graffiti on the wall of a synagogue in York region stated: "Jews must die. Osama Bin Laden lives." Swastikas were spray-painted on walls in other locations in the region.

People demonstrating in front of the Israeli Embassy in Toronto blamed the Jews for the September 11 attacks.

An apartment building in Toronto was defaced with the words "F**k the Jews."

20-30 students in Toronto circled two identifiably Jewish males and shouted antisemitic remarks at them.

November:

A Bathurst Street apartment building had "F**k Jews" written all over an elevator.

Swastikas were found engraved in three elevators of a building in Toronto where elderly people and some Holocaust survivors live.

December:

A Thornhill man received a series of threatening phone messages after his pro-Israel letter appeared in the Toronto Sun, threats like: "you f**king Jew bastard...we're coming to get you and your family."

In Richmond Hill, six mezuzahs were removed and some were broken in half after there was a condo dispute regarding whether the association would allow them on the doorposts.

2000**February:**

A Toronto high school was targeted with graffiti. Several swastikas with racial slurs were scrawled on the walls.

April:

The owners of a building supply store in Toronto received a letter with obscene graphics and the words "Looking for the Jewboys at Jewland Lumber? Give them the best for Passover."

May:

The word "Jew" was written on a car door outside a Jewish house.

A student walked into a Toronto high school classroom and claimed that he would go into a Bar Mitzvah wearing swastikas and saying "Heil Hitler".

July:

A man was looking through the book "The History of the Jews" in a major Thornhill bookstore and found a Holocaust denial pamphlet tucked into the pages. This technique has been used increasingly by White supremacist groups to disseminate their propaganda.

August:

The antique and treasured stained glass windows of a locked and gated downtown Toronto Jewish cemetery were smashed deliberately.

October:

On Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, two synagogues in the North end of Toronto had eggs thrown at the doors and windows. One of the synagogues had the word "Palestine"

scrawled on the wall.

November:

The largest reform synagogue in Canada received a bomb threat. In a Toronto university, graffiti was found in a washroom claiming "I am an Arab student. There should be another Hitler and he should do the job right this time. Death to all Jews."

Sources:

The sources for the hate incidents reported are Statistics Canada, The B'nai Brith League of Human Rights Reports, The Canadian Jewish News, Sun Media, The Montreal Gazette, The Suburban, The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, CBC News (online archives), The Ottawa Citizen, and The National Post.

