

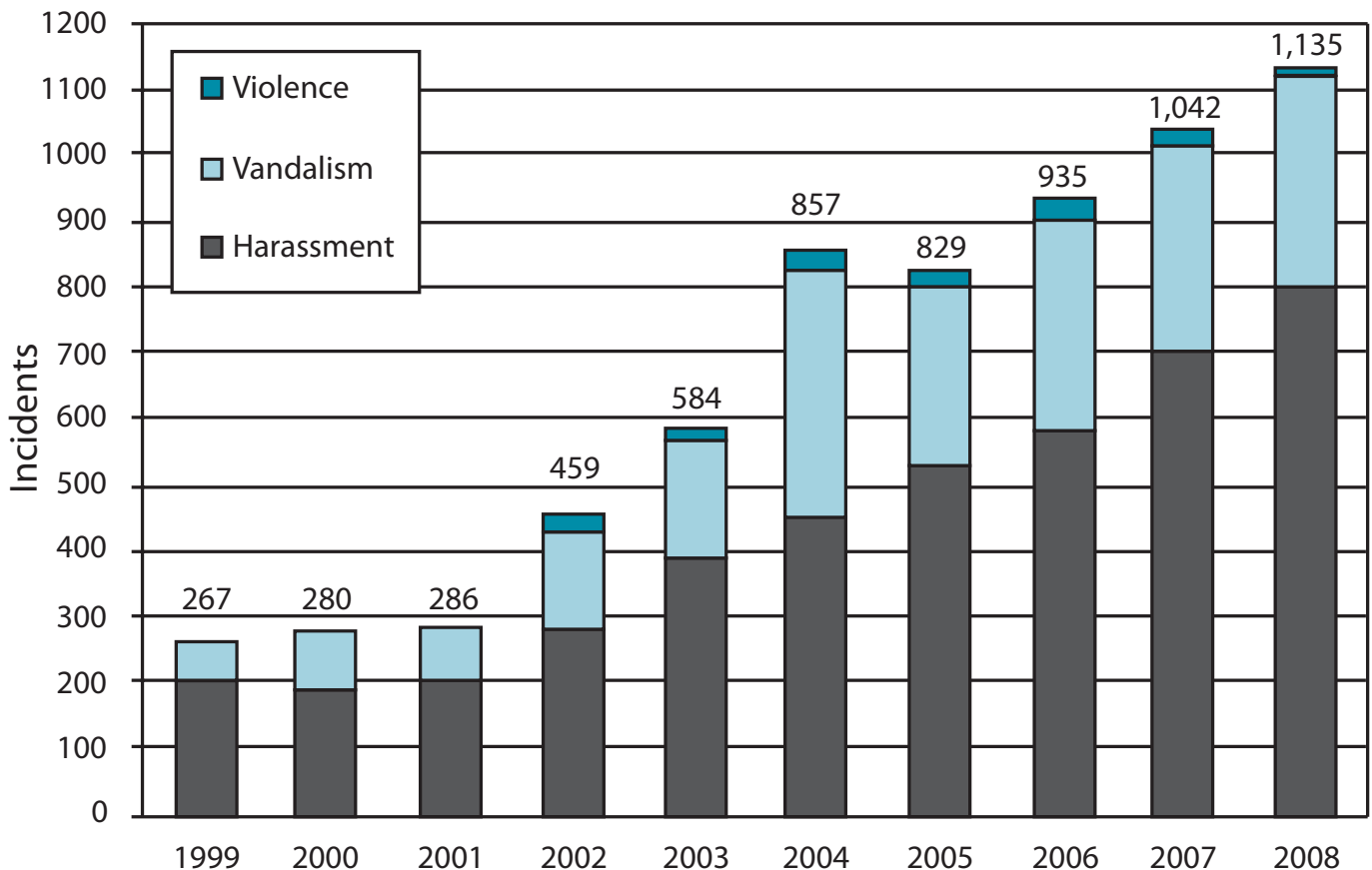
# NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 2008 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents

For twenty-seven years, the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada has documented hate-related incidents against Jews in this country in its annual *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents*. This study provides an important picture of racism against the Jewish community, as expressed in incidents of harassment, vandalism or violence against individual Jews or community institutions.

### Findings of the *Audit* include:

- 1,135 antisemitic incidents were reported in 2008, the highest figure ever recorded in the history of the *Audit* and an increase of 8.9% from 2007.
- A ten-year view shows that incidents have increased four-fold over the last decade. When the League released its first *Audit* 27 years ago, the number of reported incidents was only 63.
- The majority of incidents across Canada consistently occur in Ontario. In 2008, 682 incidents (60.1% of the total) took place in Ontario. Of these, 538 incidents took place in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and 62 in Ottawa.
- Incidents in Quebec - representing 21.6% of all Canadian cases - dropped by 15.8% to 245, compared to 291 in 2007. Of these, 201 incidents took place in Montreal.
- Incidents were up by 31.1% in British Columbia (80 cases) and by 56.3% in Saskatchewan (25). There were 34 incidents in Manitoba and 19 in the Atlantic Region. In Alberta, there were 50 incidents, a marked increase of 78.6% from the 28 reported in 2007.
- The 1,135 incidents across Canada break down as follows: 803 cases of harassment (70.7%), 318 of vandalism (28%) and 14 of violence (1.2%). As in previous years, harassment continues to comprise the majority of cases.



## Trends

- There were 50 incidents targeting Jewish places of worship and 17 against community centres. Incidents included death threats against Rabbis and synagogue staff, as well as vandalism of Jewish communal institutions. Such incidents were perpetrated right across the country, including Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Barrie, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver and Kelowna.
- 105 incidents targeted Jews in their own homes. Incidents included mezuzah desecrations, which targeted individuals who identified their homes as Jewish.
- 76 incidents occurred on university campuses, continuing the sustained level of tension in 2007, when there were 78 incidents.
- Reflecting the range of new technologies used to disseminate hate, there were 405 reports of web-based hate activity with a Canadian connection, a 30.6% increase from the 310 cases in 2007.
- 547 incidents, close to half the total in Canada overall, took place in the last four months of 2008. This can be linked to fall-out from the developing economic recession and the Bernard Madoff financial scandal. Historically, antisemitism has increased in this type of climate, as disgruntled citizens seek a scapegoat to blame for their personal difficulties.
- Of the 151 incidents that occurred in December, the month with the highest total of the year, 70 related to the emerging war in Gaza. Of these, 36 occurred in the last few days of the year as tensions heightened. This is typically a very quiet period due to the holiday season.

## Examples of Incidents

Edmonton, AB – A synagogue is vandalized, and its windows smashed.

Winnipeg, MB – A young Jewish boy traveling with his mother on a public bus is threatened and taunted with antisemitic slurs.

Toronto, ON – A government health worker is called a “Christ Killer” by her supervisor.

London, ON – Public facilities on the University of Western Ontario campus are defaced with antisemitic graffiti.

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

Toronto, ON – 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.

Montreal, QC – A blogger writes antisemitic comments about Hassidim in Quebec.

Moncton, NB – A number of city sites, including a university, are defaced with antisemitic slurs and swastikas, as part of a vandalism spree.

Sainte-Agathe, QC – A visibly Jewish man visiting the area is assaulted while walking to synagogue, as bystanders watch.

Barrie, ON – A synagogue is defaced with the word “Nazi” just prior to the High Holidays.

Montreal, QC – Bricks are thrown through the windows of a synagogue.

Calgary, AB – A posting on Facebook calls for a “Kick a Jew Day”.

Charlottetown, PEI – A Revenue Canada employee tells a taxpayer not to worry, the agency is “Not Jewing” him.

**The full text of the *Audit* can be accessed at: [www.bnaibrith.ca](http://www.bnaibrith.ca)**

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