



observatorio**web**
por una internet sin discriminación

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE INTERNET

Anual Report
**20
21**



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Introduction

For several years now, the Internet has been strongly rooted in our society, and it is difficult for us to conceive of our lives without the possibility of being connected through online platforms. In this context, discrimination and racism in social networks are a central problem that affects our societies. Antisemitism is part of this network of hate speech, and is reflected in prejudices that, beyond the technological changes that impact the communication of societies, are still worryingly current.

During 2021, the question and debate about the spread of hate speech on online platforms have been particularly current. Just beginning the year, the takeover of the Capitol in the United States marked a turning point in the behavior of social networks and, in turn, made visible how certain extremist groups operate. Just as it is often said that the Internet democratizes, the organization of the demonstration and the support of political sectors through Twitter and other platforms showed that, in certain cases, social networks can also put democracies and various groups at risk.

In view of these events, it also highlights the migration of hate groups to alternative unregulated platforms, many of which were created specially to allow and promote such speech. In this way, extremist groups no longer publish all their content on the most popular social networks. They currently use the most recognized platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to attract and lead followers to sites with less regulation such as Gab.me, 4chan and VK, among others. This phenomenon is an earlier step in the process of recruiting people who sympathize with extremist groups.

In this sense, it is worth asking what the responsibility of the large Internet companies is when it comes to identifying users or groups that, deliberately, keep to the fine line of what is allowed and what is not with the aim of spreading hate messages and recruit new followers. Consequently, it is possible to wonder what to do with the promoters of these messages. A clear example is the case of groups that spread conspiracy theories that point to famous personalities, whether Jewish or not, but pointing them out as such and holding them responsible for the pandemic or for benefiting from vaccines. In this way, they manage to get around the moderation policies of the platforms and spread antisemitic ideas about an alleged plan for world domination.

As a flip side of the same coin, the statements of the former employee of Facebook, Frances Haugen, are an important warning that allows us to understand the behavior of Internet companies. Haugen revealed that the platform was aware that their use "harms children, fuels division and undermines our democracy" and facilitates the promotion of hate. In this line, as pointed out by the Center for Counteracting Digital Hate (CCDH) in his report "*Malgorithm*"², it is proven that Instagram –social network that is part of the business conglomerate now called Meta (former Facebook)- has repeatedly failed in its commitments to regulate hate speech and the dissemination of fake news.

1-<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-58810099>

2-<https://www.counterhate.com/malgorithm>



Internet companies have made various efforts to moderate online content. And, in many cases, they have only reacted to public criticism. Thus, social platforms with billions of users remain at the center of the conflict regarding their role in democracies, the transparency of their actions and the responsibility for the content that circulates on them. In short, the operation of companies in the sector has repercussions on our societies and, particularly, on hate speech and antisemitism.

Undoubtedly, during 2021 the most relevant event related to antisemitism was the escalation of war between the State of Israel and the Hamas terrorist group that took place in May of that year. As often happens in these cases, unknowingly or deliberately, many publications contain strong antisemitic tendencies. During the conflict, social networks were flooded with content around the issue. For example, the amount of content collected on Twitter by the Web Observatory multiplied by 30, as it increased from approximately 120,000 average monthly posts to more than 3 million. Antisemitism experienced a notable increase in nominal terms as a result of the large amount of content that circulated on the networks. At the same time, growth in percentage terms was observed, especially on Twitter, where antisemitism doubled.

Another key point, in terms of the promotion and spread of hate ideologies, is the violence on gaming platforms. While online gaming is a recreational activity for thousands of users, various hate groups recruit and radicalize potential members, mostly young people, through mass-use games. Radicalization and antisemitism on gaming platforms it is not unrelated to the Latin American region; for example, the game "Fusan al-Aqsa" developed in Brazil invites those who use it to assassinate Israeli soldiers and eliminate the Jewish presence in Jerusalem³.

Currently, various States are debating the role of social networks and hate speech. Brazil is a clear example, where there is a bill to prohibit the Holocaust⁴ denial, as well as in several countries of the European Union. On the contrary, unfortunately, Poland⁵ is in a clear regression through the adoption of policies that are fertile ground for historical revisionism of the Holocaust. This discourse has repercussions on social networks and gives rise to a greater circulation of denialist and revisionist arguments that, as they are now protected by public institutions, lead to higher levels of antisemitism. In view of this, it is clear that certain supra-state organizations are acting on the matter, such as the European Union -which presented the first regional strategy to combat antisemitism and promote Jewish life- and the Organization of American States, which appointed its first Commissioner for monitoring and combating antisemitism.

3-<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/tech-news/premium-new-palestinian-video-game-calls-to-eliminate-all-zionist-soldiers-1.10254521>

4-<https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/729427-projeto-criminaliza-a-negacao-do-holocausto-judeu/>

5-https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/02/01/actualidad/1517475787_162025.html



In this scenario, for the fourth consecutive year, the Web Observatory prepared the "Annual Report on Antisemitism on the Internet" with the 2021 results of the survey on antisemitic content in the Spanish language. As in previous years, the research was carried out by the Web Observatory, a joint initiative of the Latin American Jewish Congress (CJL), the Delegation of Argentine Israelite Associations (DAIA) and the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) that since 2010 has been working against discrimination on the Internet, for a responsible use of technologies and proposes to develop effective strategies to combat online⁶ discrimination..

This study -which analyzes a sample of publications made on the main social networks and forums of sites and digital media in Latin America- presents the results of 2021 and compares them with those obtained in previous years. To prepare the report, the Google Trends tool, and a platform of social listening (*see Methodological Section*) were used.

The document is organized as follows. First, the main findings of the 2021 survey are summarized. Secondly, the contents that circulate in the main social networks and online media forums are analyzed. Subsequently, two thematic blocks of interest are addressed: the conflict in the Middle East that occurred in May 2021 and the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, the conclusions of the report, the final comments and a detail of the methodology used are highlighted.

6-The Web Observatory monitors the Internet from a multidisciplinary approach together with governments, Internet companies and other NGOs. Within this framework, it prepares the "Annual Report on Anti-Semitism on the Internet" and online discrimination against other minorities.



||| Main findings

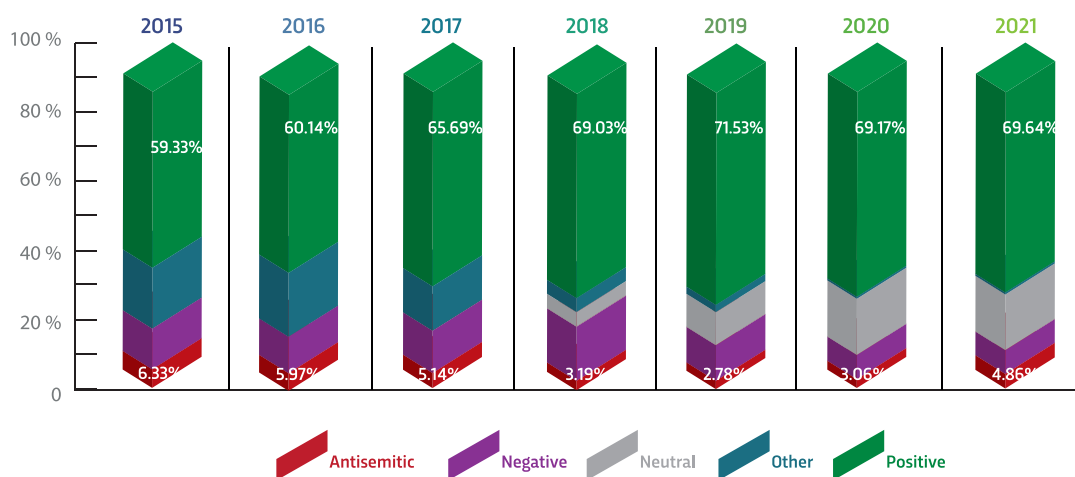
- In 2021, in search results on **Google** analyzed, a slight increase in antisemitism was observed in comparison to previous year. For the first time since 2018, the percentage of antisemitic content (4.86% of the total collected) is higher than the historical average of 4.48%.
- In Youtube, year after year the percentage of videos with positive content increases and the proportion of antisemitic videos decreases. Anti-Zionism, understood as a form of antisemitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, is the most repeated argument on this platform.
- The low but sustained level of antisemitism in Google and YouTube can be explained, among other factors, by the regulation implemented by Google. This results in the migration of users to alternative platforms, without moderation policies, such as Bitchute and 4chan.
- 7.50% of the content sample collected in Facebook had antisemitic expressions. Half of that material was generated in May, during the conflict between Israel and Hamas.
- On Facebook, antisemitic expressions are articulated with two main arguments. The demonization of Israel, even unrelated to the conflict in the Middle East, is the main one. Secondly, plots revolving around the "New World Order" are highlighted, a modern version of the conspiracy called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."
- 15,327 user comments on relevant topics in digital media forums from seven Latin American countries were analyzed. 10.97% had antisemitic content, with a reduction of about two percentage compared to 2020.
- With a constant drop in the last three years, a great disparity was verified in the levels of antisemitism in the user forums of the main digital media. The portals of Chile, Uruguay and Panama show levels well above the average.
- The conflict in the Middle East, which took place in May 2021, impacted on the image of Israel and the Jewish communities of Latin America. During this warlike escalation between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas, there was a marked increase in antisemitism in the analyzed social networks and in the comments of digital media users.
- During the conflict between Israel and Hamas, antisemitism on Twitter doubled from the annual average. However, this content had a reach of 2% on the platform, in many cases limited to niches where discriminatory speech is widely promoted and accepted.
- The Covid-19 pandemic updated antisemitic discourses on social networks. At the beginning of the health crisis, Jews were held responsible for the disease and for not complying with the restrictions. Later, new conspiracies spread around a plan to dominate the world population through vaccination campaigns and health passes.



With the purpose to address antisemitic content on Google -the most recognized and used Internet search engine in the world by the number of users-, the main results of searches related to Jewish themes were surveyed and a slight rebound in antisemitism was observed, compared to 2020. As shown in Chart 1, for the first time since 2018 the percentage of antisemitic content analyzed in 2021 (4.86% of the total collected) is higher than the historical average of 4.48%. Meanwhile, the positive contents remained stable, although with a slight decrease to reach two thirds of the total (67.64%)⁷.

CHART 1

Google results analysis (2015-2021)



Source: Web Observatory (2021).



In Google searches the level of anti-Semitism remains low but sustained, with a slight increase of 1.8% compared to 2020. In 2021 there was a marked increase in antisemitic content related to the term "Zionism".

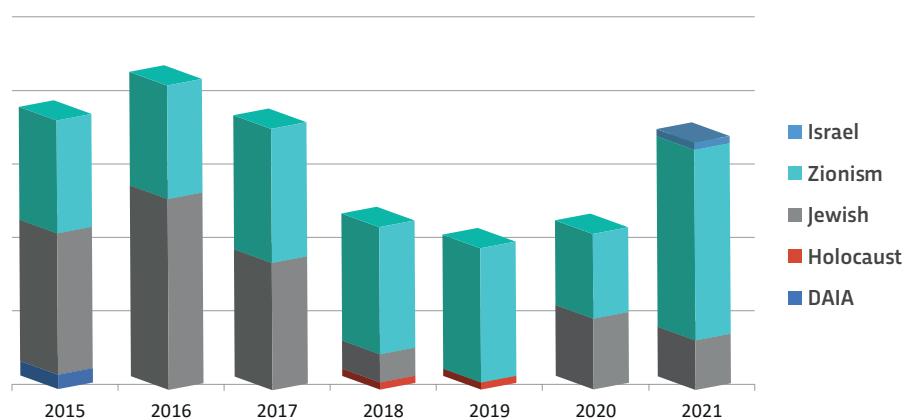
⁷-The "positive" category refers to content that highlights the image of Israel, the Jewish communities, the traditions religious, the repudiation of anti-Semitic acts, the demands for justice for attacks and the memory of the Holocaust. It is understood by "negative", meanwhile, to content that legitimately criticizes Israel, trivializes and/or relativizes the Holocaust without this entails hate speech, and criticizes Jewish community entities.



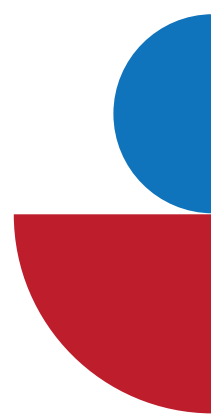
It is also important to analyze the arguments underlying the antisemitism that circulates in the main results of Google searches. In this sense, notes from the media such as Telesur and HispanTV, linked to Venezuela and Iran, respectively, were highlighted. At the same time, dictionary-format websites were found that include antisemitic definitions of "Zionism" and "Jews." In addition, in 2021 a marked increase in antisemitic content related to the topic "Zionism" was observed, and it was the year with the highest antisemitic content related to that topic (see chart 2).

CHART 2

Google results with antisemitic content according to associated concept (2015-2021)



Source: Web Observatory (2021).



It is the main platform for online audiovisual content and one of the most popular sites in the world, where more than 2,000 million hours of videos are transmitted each month.

Image 1. Example of antisemitic content on YouTube (2021)

Chilean Patagonia - Mans Tv - Without Zionists!

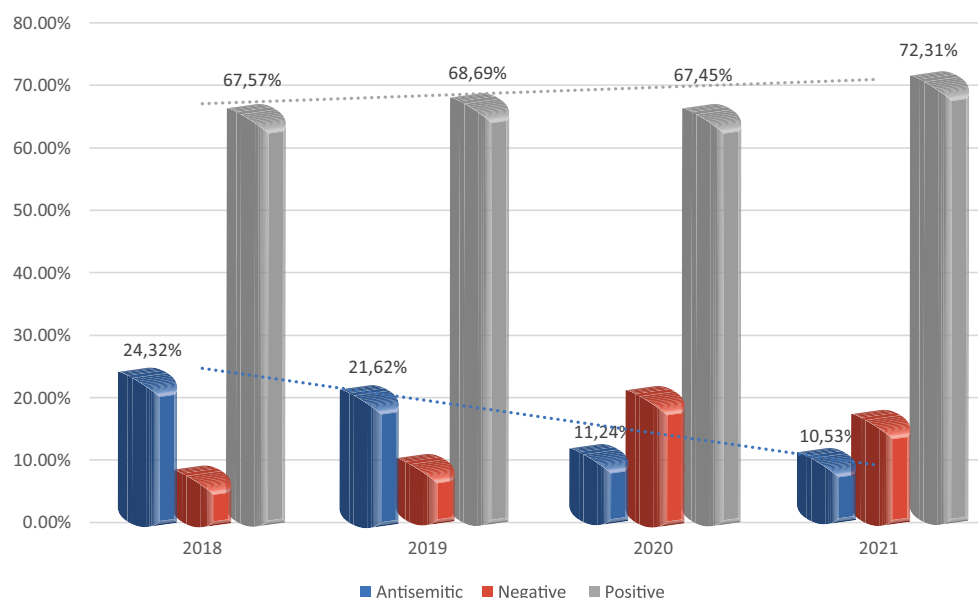


No Andinia, No Zionism/ Mans: Always Forward!

By means of the same methodology used to analyze the Google search engine, in the case of YouTube it was observed that, year after year, the percentage of videos with positive content increases and the proportion of antisemitic videos decreases (see Chart 3).

CHART 3

YouTube results analysis (2018-2021)



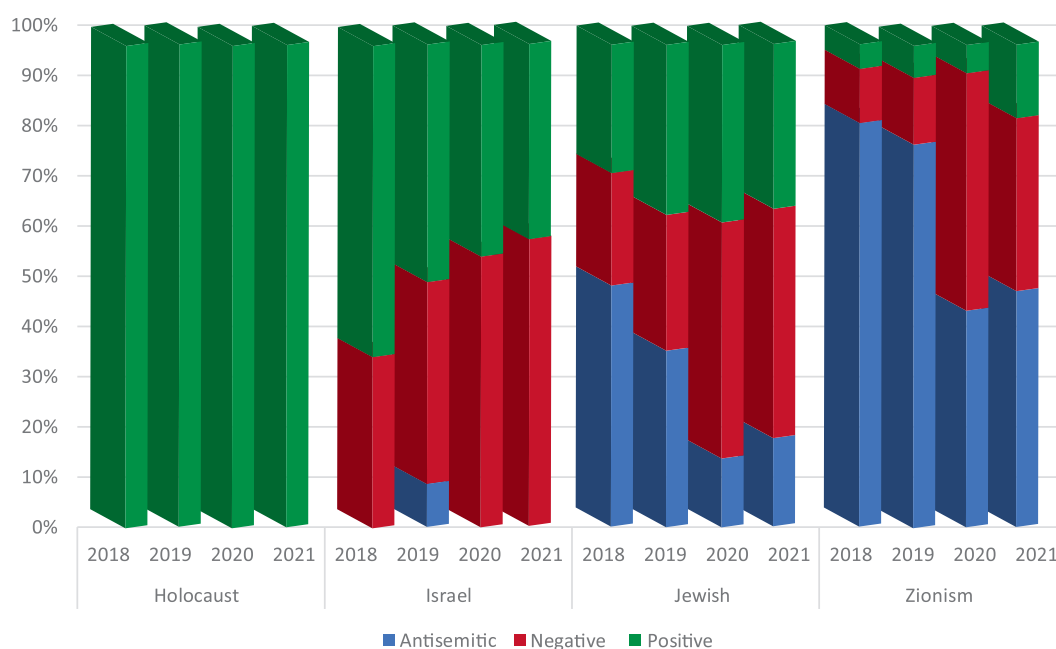
Source: Web Observatory (2021).



Anti-Zionism, understood as a form of antisemitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, is the most repeated argument in the main results on this platform. As in the case of Google, the Telesur media is a powerhouse of antisemitic content. With significant impact on the platform, it accuses Zionism -among other arguments- of wanting to “take over the world”. On the other hand, various videos were also collected that seek to “unveil the secrets” of why Jews have great fortunes. Whether with positive or negative connotations, these contents about the supposed economic boom of the Jews promote prejudice.

CHART 4

YouTube results analysis by theme (2018-2021)



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

As shown in Chart 4, the category “Zionism” is the one that accumulates the most antisemitic content year after year, although it experiences decreases compared to 2018 and 2019. On the other hand, between 2018 and 2021, no Holocaust denial content was found within the main results on the platform.



With more than 2,700 million users in the world, Facebook remains today as the main social network on the Internet.

Image 2. Example of antisemitic content on Facebook (2021).



THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION
If ever a book could produce mass hatred, this is it.
This book is nothing but lies and defamation.
(Elie Wiesel, Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize)
The Protocols of The Elders of Zion is the most famous antisemitic publication and the most widely distributed of the contemporary era. Their lies about the Jews, which have been repeatedly discredited, are still circulating today, especially on the Internet.
The... [see more]

Image 3. Example of antisemitic content on Facebook (2021).

Este par de lagartos GOBIERNA EL MUNDO!
 Jacob Rothschild y David Rockefeller son los verdaderos amos del mundo. Son en realidad parientes pues se casan entre ellos mismos para no dispersar sus fortunas, apellidos como Silverstein, Goldman, Soros, y la mayoría de apellidos judíos de grandes agiotistas, son solo nombres inventados por ellos mismos para camuflar y esconder sus inmensas propiedades el mismo apellido ROTHSCHILD es inventado su apellido original es BAUER! Se autonombren judíos para poder acusar a quien los ataque o denuncie de antisemitas y eliminar hasta con una guerra mundial a sus enemigos. Dueños de los

This pair of lizards GOVERN THE WORLD!
Jacob Rothschild and David Rockefeller are the true owners of the world. They are actually relatives because they marry among themselves to avoid dispersing their fortunes. Surnames such as Silverstein, Goldman, Soros, and most Jewish surnames of big egotists are only names invented by themselves to camouflage and hide their immense properties. The surname ROTHSCHILD is invented, the original surname is BAUER! They call themselves Jewish to be able to accuse anyone who attacks or denounces them as antisemitic and eliminate even with a World War their enemies. Owners of...[]

By using a tool of social listening⁸, the comments on posts related to Jewish issues on the Facebook pages of the main digital newspapers in Latin America⁹ were analyzed. Following the compilation of 94,398 publications, it was found that 7.50% of the total of that content was antisemitic.

8- See Methodological Section.

9- Comments were analyzed in: Clarín, La Nación, Infobae, Emol, La Tercera, BioBio, El Tiempo, Las 2 orillas, Pulzo, El Mundo, El País, La Vanguardia, El Observador, El País UY, Portal Montevideo.

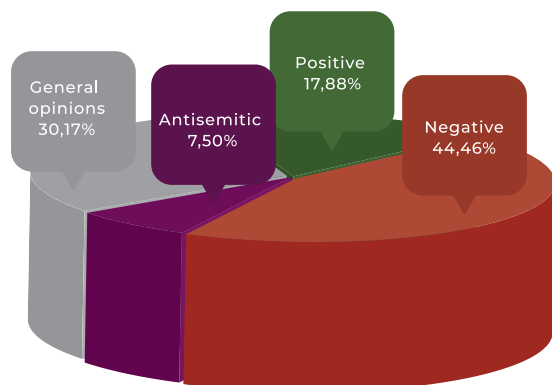


"Half of the antisemitic content analyzed on Facebook was generated in May, during the conflict between the State of Israel and Hamas"



CHART 5

Analysis of comments in Facebook



As evidenced by Image 4, this word cloud orders the words with the greatest specific weight on the platform by size, considering the diffusion of the content and the number of times the term is repeated in the content collected. In addition, it is important to note that, unlike what was recorded in previous years, the theme of Holocaust denial is not the main source of anti-semitism in this social network.

Image 4. Word cloud of antisemitic content on Facebook



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

The expressions that have the greatest weight in the analysis are the following: "Zionists", "Palestinians" and "New World Order". The results found are consistent with the peak of content generated during the armed conflict between Israel and Hamas, which is analyzed in depth in Chapter 7 of this report. In fact, 51.70% of the content analyzed corresponds to publications made during the armed conflict, in May 2021.



CHART 6

Monthly evolution of content analyzed on Facebook

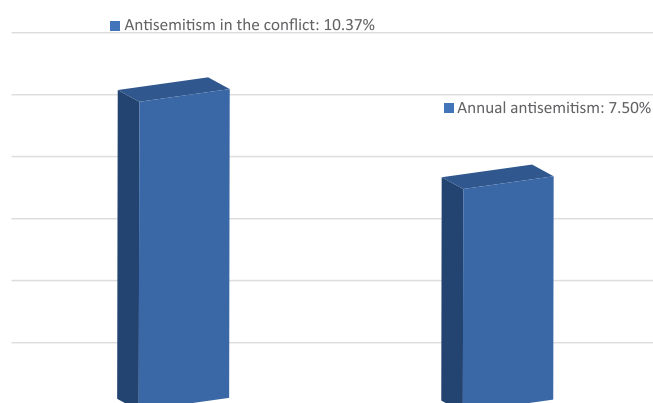


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

An interesting analysis consists of comparing the results obtained during the armed conflict in Israel, which occurred in May 2021, with those of the rest of the year. In that short period, 48,808 of the 94,398 total contents were collected, that is, 51.70%. More specifically, an increase in antisemitism is noted during the days of the escalation, as observed in the Graph 7. While the annual average of antisemitism was 7.5%, during the conflict hate content reached 10.37%. In this line, of every four antisemitic contents collected during 2021, three of them were made during the eleven days of the war period.

CHART 7

Level of antisemitism compared on Facebook



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

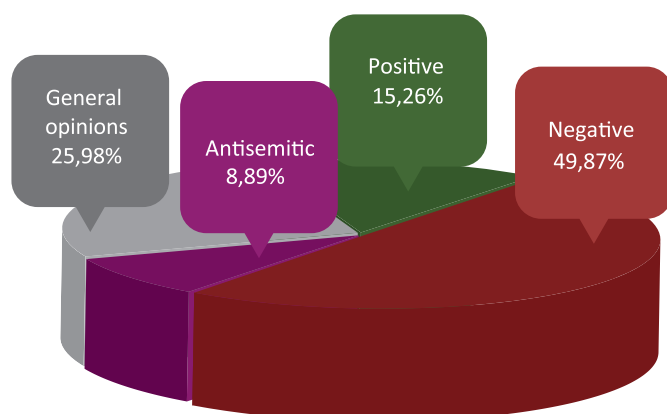
Leaving aside the conflict of the month of May, the different lines of argument used by users to promote and justify their hate to Jews can be established. The demonization of Israel remains a major argument; but it is intertwined with other discursive lines, such as those referring to the conspiracies about a plan of world domination by the Jews, which stand out as the most frequent. Another of the arguments used by those who formulate antisemitic expressions on Facebook is the denial or trivialization of the Holocaust within the framework of anti-vaccine conspiracies, as well as the establishment of parallels between the Nazi regime and care measures such as the vaccination health pass. Furthermore, there are other arguments, such as the blaming of the Jews for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Twitter, the social network for political debate par excellence, has the particularity of having a high volatility in interactions, as well as a large circulation of both true and false information. During 2021, on this microblogging platform 6,561,432 contents related to Jewish themes were compiled, which generated more than 67 billion potential impressions¹⁰ in users.

CHART 8

Twitter content analysis



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

Of the total content collected, 8.89% antisemitism and 49.87% negative content were found, while a peak of references was recorded during the armed conflict in the Middle East. As was the case with Facebook, as can be seen in the following chart, the relevance of the armed conflict during the month of May within the total content collected is clear.



In the sample of content collected on Twitter throughout 2021, 8.89% was found to be anti-Semitic. This number doubled during the conflict in the Middle East.

¹⁰- Potential impressions are understood as the maximum number of users that the content can reach, considering the number of followers that the account that broadcasts it has and the interactions that the content generates.



CHART 9

Monthly evolution of posts analyzed on Twitter

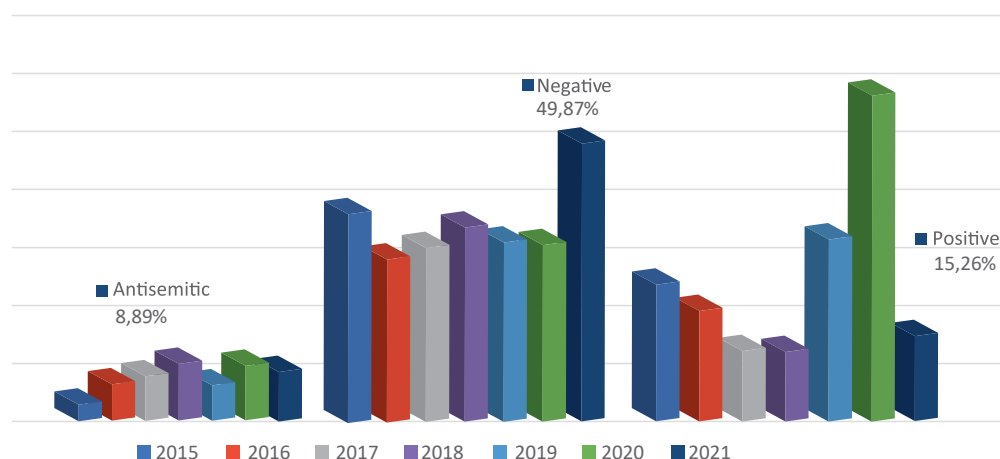


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

As highlighted in Chart 10, there is evidence of a slight decrease in antisemitism compared to 2020 and a significant growth in negative content, especially during May 2021. Inversely, the positive content suffered a notable drop, to a certain extent explained by the effect of the escalation of the war.

CHART 10

Twitter content analysis



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

If a deeper analysis is carried out, antisemitism on Twitter will be particularly related to antisemitism linked to anti-Zionism. It is very common to find references that link the Holocaust and Israel's actions under the premise "the Jews do the same thing in Palestine that was done to them." Therefore, the concepts that have the greatest weight in the cloud of words represented in the Image 8 are: "Jewish", "Palestinian", "Zionist", "antisemite", "Israel" and "Holocaust". Another expression used during the May conflict was to label Israel a "Jewish terrorist organization", spreading a libel against the entire Jewish people.



On the other hand, it is not insignificant to note that the expression “New World Order” appears, which revitalizes old antisemitic libels often updated to the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Image 5. Example of classic antisemitism, linked to the “Jewish” topic. (2021)



Image 6. Example of antisemitism linked to “Zionism” and “Holocaust”, in the context of the peak of content due to the armed conflict of May 2021



Image 7. Example of antisemitism with multiple categories structured in the concept of “New World Order”.



The Rockefeller Foundation supports the LGBT movement, the population reduction, the new world order, the Roma Club, massive vb@kunazionn, finances terrorism, euthanasia, eugenics, the terrorist State of Israel, and it has all the journalists and politicians in the list of envelopes. Palestine with the Holocaust?

Image 8. Twitter word cloud

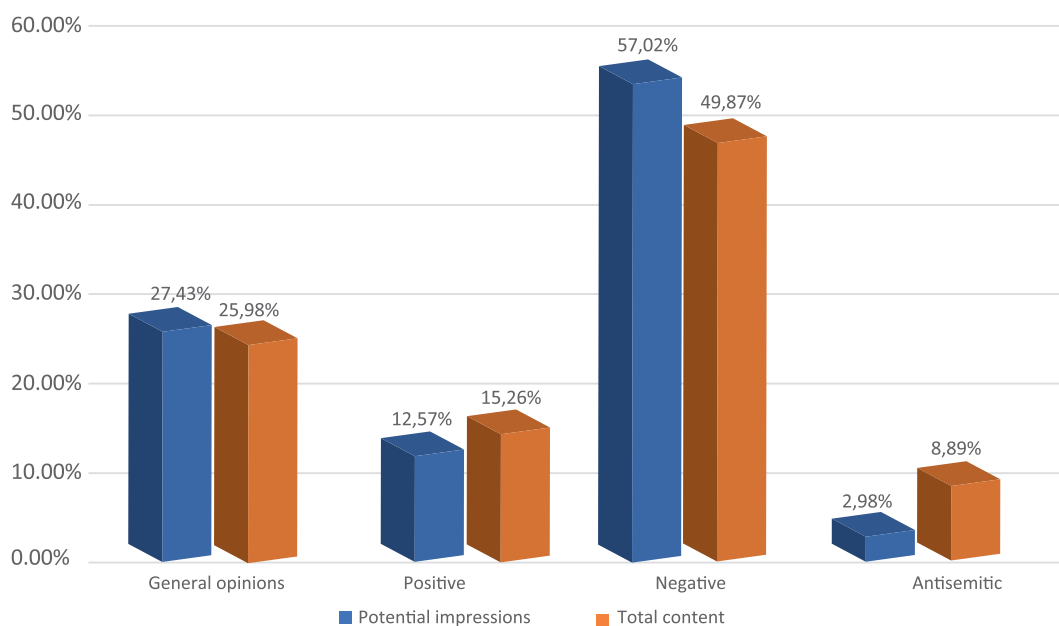


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

Unlike what happens on Google and YouTube, where well-positioned content is seen by an audience of thousands of people, content posted on Twitter does not necessarily reach many users. A post on that social network can "go viral" or, on the contrary, only reach a handful of people. But the crossing of data between potential impressions and total content allows us to establish what types of content have the highest circulation on that platform. As shown in the graph below, negative expressions reach proportionally more users. An element to highlight is that antisemitic content has a lower spreading with respect to its total incidence in the collected content. In other words, while 8.89% of the analyzed content had antisemitic content, it only had an impact of 2.98% in the total impressions reached.

CHART 11

Comparative analysis of impressions and percentage of content on Twitter



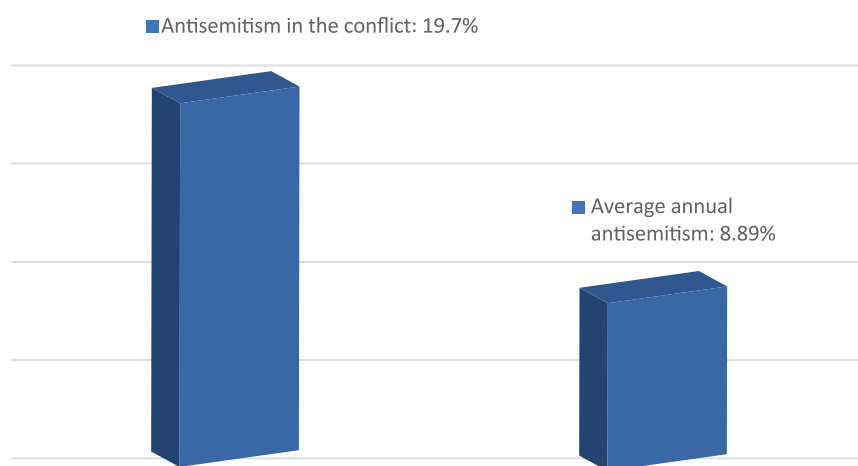
Source: Web Observatory (2021).



As occurred on Facebook, a high percentage of the content analyzed on Twitter was concentrated on the days of the conflict in the Middle East and represented 37.51% of the annual total. A higher level of antisemitism was observed in the period of the escalation of violence above the annual average: while, throughout 2021, 8.89% of the content analyzed was antisemitic, in the days of the war conflict 19.27% was collected.

CHART 12

Comparative analysis of annual antisemitism and antisemitism in armed conflict on Twitter



Source: Web Observatory (2021).



Comments in digital media

Portal and digital media forums stood out as the first exchange spaces among users since the creation of the Internet. Today, most digital news sites maintain a space of this type. During 2021, 15,327 comments on relevant topics in digital media from seven countries were analyzed: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Uruguay, as reflected in the table below.

Table 1. User comments on digital media forums

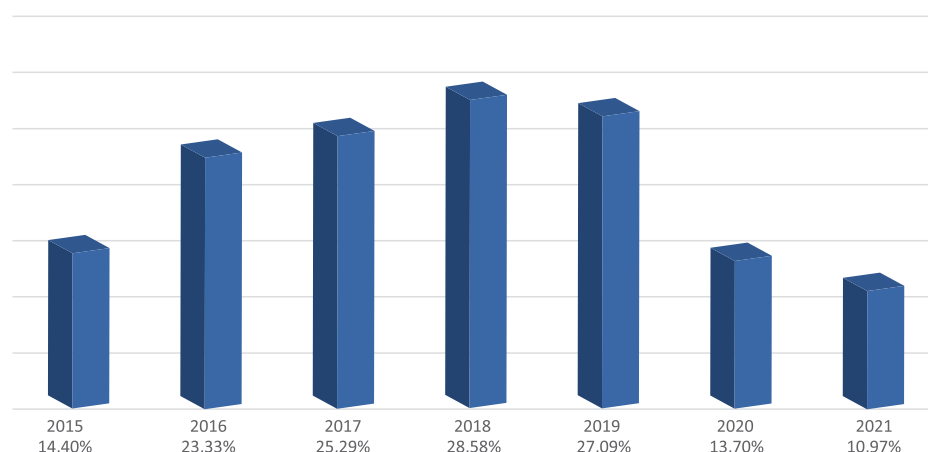
Country	Analyzed notes	Average number of comments per note collected
Argentina	431	14,7
Brasil	156	6,7
Chile	246	14,9
Colombia	107	7,0
Costa Rica	35	3,9
Panamá	64	5,0
Uruguay	233	13,1
Total	1272	9,4

Source: Web Observatory (2021).

In the comments analyzed, it was found that 10.97% had antisemitic content, with a reduction of about two percentage points from 2020. Following this line, the last two years have shown a marked drop in antisemitic content in the comments of the main digital portals in the region.

CHART 13

Percentage of antisemitic comments per year on digital news portals



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

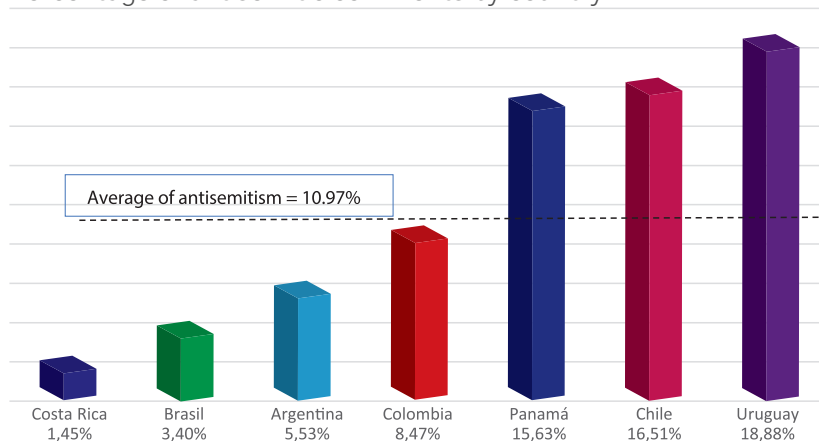
The Chart 14 shows the level of antisemitism registered in each of the countries considered. Uruguay, Chile and Panama, in that order, are above the general average for antisemitism.



Comments in digital media

CHART 14

Percentage of antisemitic comments by country

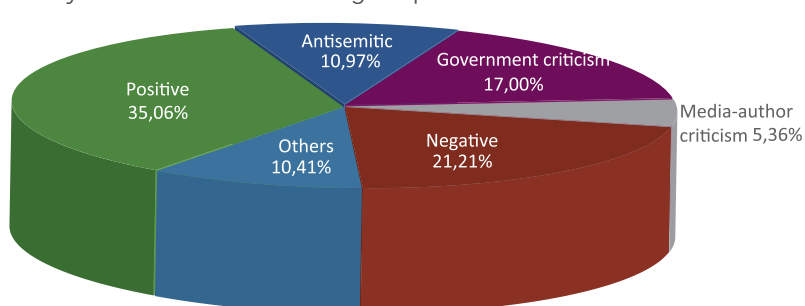


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

As shown by Chart 15, more than a third of the comments are positive towards the Jewish communities and Israel. As in previous years, criticism of the media and governments is one of the central topics in discussion forums. Regarding negative comments, in many cases they are opinions contrary to the actions of the State of Israel.

CHART 15

Analysis of comments on digital portals



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

As shown by Chart 16, the media Emol and BioBio, from Chile; Subrayado, Montevideo and El País, from Uruguay, and La Estrella, from Panama are the media whose reader forums have a higher than average level of antisemitism. The case of Uruguay is especially striking, where three of the four media collected are above the annual average.



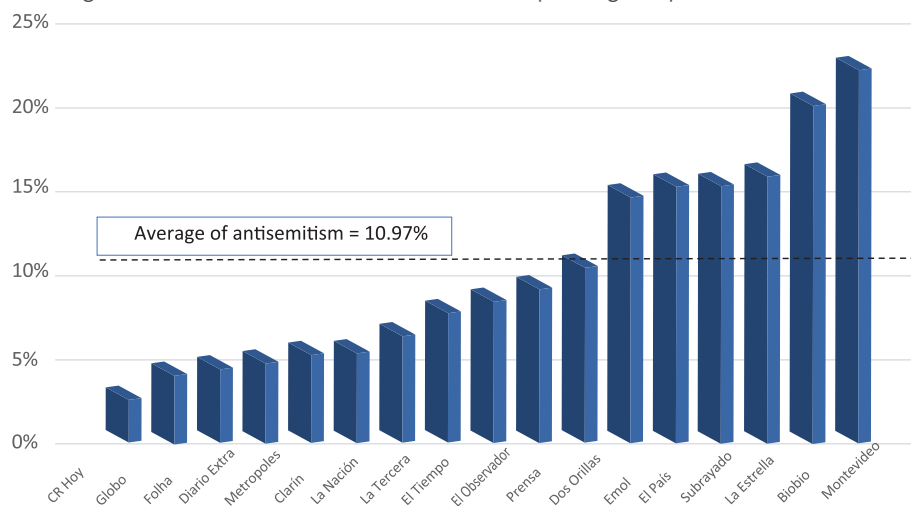
The last two years exhibit a marked drop of anti-Semitic content in the comments section of the region's digital media.



Comments in digital media

CHART 16

Average number of antisemitic comments per digital portal

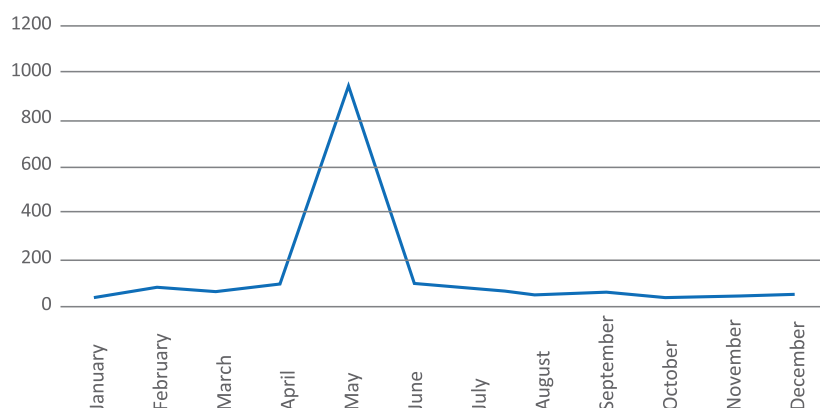


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

As in 2020, the largest amount of antisemitic content is found in notes that refer to "Israel". Due to the conflict in the Middle East, there has been a significant increase in antisemitic content in these publications, which increases from 33.16%, in 2020, to 71.27% in 2021. However, there is a significant volume of antisemitic comments distributed throughout the period analyzed.

CHART 17

Antisemitic comments on digital portals by month



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

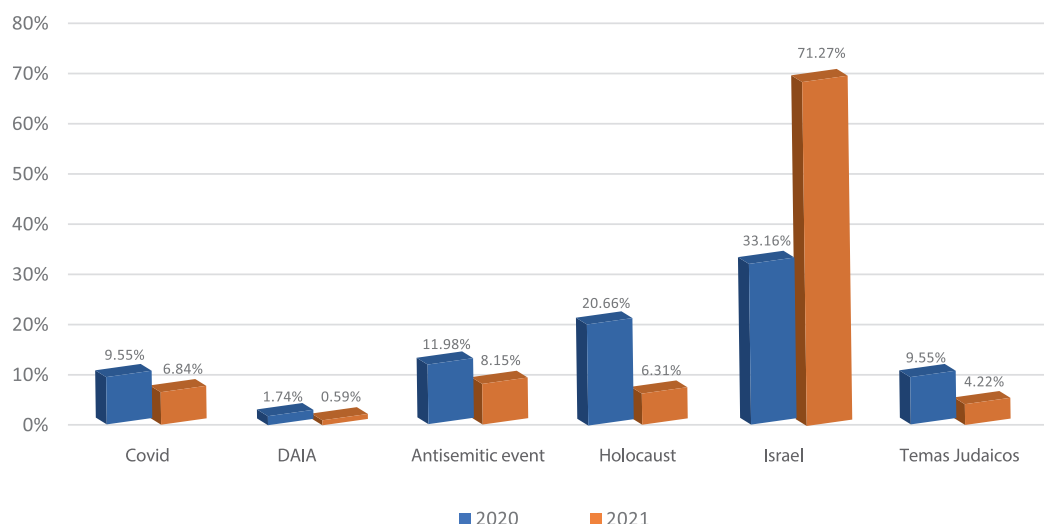
As shown in the graph above, there is an important concentration of antisemitic comments in May, in correlation with the armed conflict between Israel and the Hamas group.



Comments in digital

CHART 18

Percentage of antisemitic comments on digital portals by topic (2020-2021)

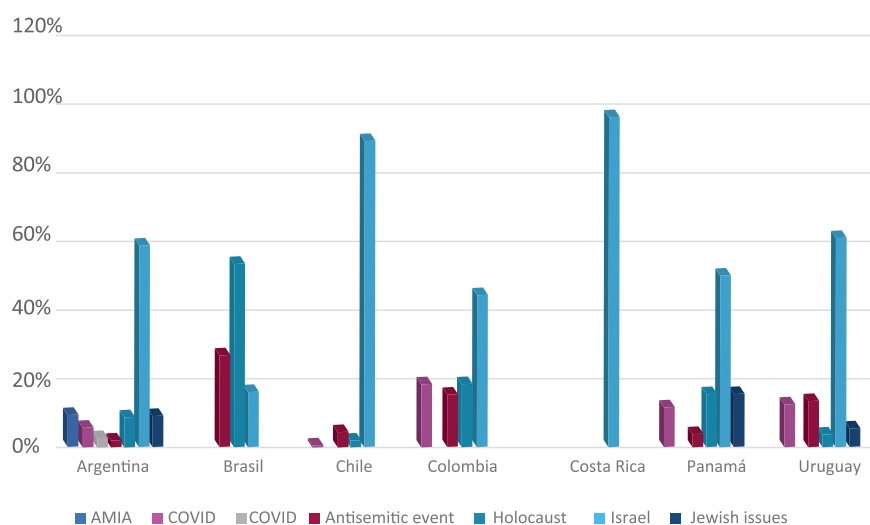


Source: Web Observatory (2021).

The following graph shows antisemitism disaggregated by country and by theme. Except for the case of Brazil, where most of this discriminatory content is observed in comments made in news about the Holocaust, in the rest of the countries analyzed the highest percentage of antisemitism is found in stories linked to Israel.

CHART 19

Analysis of antisemitic comments on digital portals by country and theme



Source: Web Observatory (2021).



Conflict in the Middle

In May 2021, an escalation of violence took place between the State of Israel and the Hamas terrorist group, which took place between May 10 and 21, the day on which the parties agreed to a ceasefire. The conflict had a wide impact on the Internet; that is why it is one of the relevant phenomena of this report. As described in previous chapters, much of the content collected during 2021 on Facebook and Twitter was produced during those days.

Throughout the armed conflict, the content increased nominally and in percentage, with publications that addressed this issue both in general terms and with the use of antisemitic expressions. In nominal terms -that is, measured in numerical quantity of content-, a total increase of interactions referring to the general content was observed: 30 times more posts on Twitter and six times more comments on Facebook. On Twitter, collected antisemitism was five times the monthly average for that network, while on Facebook it was seven times higher than the average on that platform. In percentage terms, there was an increase in discriminatory content towards people of the Jewish religion. On Facebook, whose annual average is 7.5%, during the days of the escalation of violence it reached 10.37%. Meanwhile, on Twitter, this phenomenon was verified even more markedly: from an annual average of 8.89% anti-Semitism, 19.27% of hate content was reached.

One thing to note about antisemitic content on Twitter is that, despite having suffered an almost double increase in percentage terms, the audience reach is 2.98%. In other words, of all the impact measured on that network, only a small fraction corresponds to antisemitic content.

If the escalations of violence between Israel and Hamas in 2021 and 2014 are analyzed comparatively, as verified in the chart above, the most recent one has been less damaging to Israel's image and with lower levels of antisemitism. Just to give an example, in 2014, 24% of the content collected in comments on digital portals was discriminatory content towards Jews, while in the 2021 conflict the percentage was 11.53%.



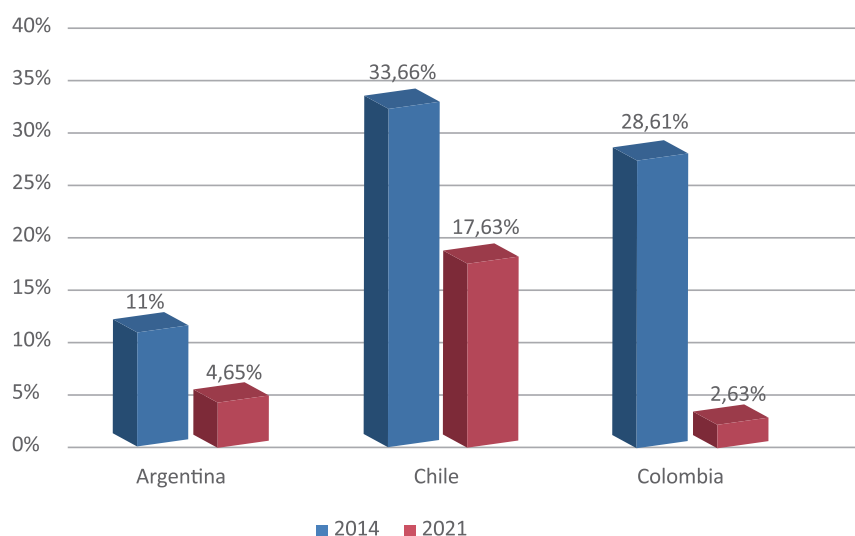
The opinions about the conflict in the Middle East followed the logic of political polarization that crosses the region.



Conflict in the Middle East

CHART 20

Comparison of antisemitic comments on digital platforms (2014 and 2021)



Source: Web Observatory (2021).

Regarding the main results of searches on Google and YouTube -both platforms with a less viral dynamic than social networks-, the level of antisemitism remained stable, with an increase of 0.5% above the annual average in the YouTube case.

The lesser relative impact of the war escalation on Israel's image is due to a multiplicity of factors. On the one hand, there is a perceived greater awareness of discrimination and anti-semitism, in particular. On the other hand, the perception of Israel as a State with the latest technology to face the Covid-19 pandemic allowed a privileged positioning of the public image of the Jewish State as a benchmark in health and technology issues.

In this regard, perception surveys were carried out on the conflict in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. In general terms, citizens were very concerned about the conflict, but without taking sides for one or the other position. Among those who took a defined position, it was closely related to the political background of the respondent.

In this line, to understand the perceptions of public opinion regarding the conflict within the framework of the phenomenon of political polarization in Latin America, the regional governments and opposition will align themselves with one or the other side as well as the media. Said processes of alignment and polarization of the diverse actors of the public agenda can be seen reflected in the analyzed social networks.

For more detailed data, readers can refer to the report prepared by the Web Observatory on this topic. It can be found at: <https://www.observatorioweb.org/informes-del-ow>



III The Covid-19 pandemic

The health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has marked the beginning of the 2020s and it is very likely that the time we live in will be marked by phenomenon of global scope. The impact of Covid-19 was, without any doubt, the most relevant issue on the public agenda. In 2021, thanks to vaccination, restrictions were left behind and a new normality gradually took place. However, far from disappearing with the end of the restrictions, the phenomenon of antisemitism related to the pandemic has changed with the new events.

The first accusations against Jews linked the origin of the virus to members of the community whose objective was to promote a new world order. With the arrival of vaccines, the content of the defamation changed to also point to alleged strategies aimed at installing the "new world order", but this time to control the population through inoculation against Covid-19. Later, with the regulations that accompanied vaccination, such as the adoption of the health pass, a new discursive line was observed from those who trivialize the Holocaust, who established parallels between health policies and the laws of Nazism. A clear example of this were the virtual demonstrations and on public roads with flags against the Nazi pass, as well as protests to journalists and the media. Although the arguments were modified during the pandemic, the core of the world domination libel remains intact, especially in groups that adhere to conspiracy theories and far-right groups.

The full report can be found at the following link:
<https://www.observatorioweb.org/informes-del-ow>



The accusations against the Jews link the origin of the virus and, later, the vaccination campaigns to conspiracies to promote a New World Order and population control.



Conclusions

Unlike 2020 -when antisemitism was largely related to conspiracy theories regarding the origin of the pandemic and with resounding cases where Jewish people did not comply with established health standards and were singled out for their faith-, 2021 stood out for the antisemitism as a consequence of the warlike conflict between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas during May of that year. As can be deduced from the content analyzed from social networks and user comments on digital portals, a peak in content production is recorded that coincides with the advent of the conflict. It is clear that the situation in Israel has repercussions on how Jews are seen throughout the world.

Repeating the trend of recent years -and increased by the aforementioned conflict-, antisemitism is mostly related to Israel and Zionism, but this was verified not only during the escalation of the war, but also throughout the year. In all the platforms analyzed, a worrying phenomenon of equating and/or comparing what happened in the Holocaust in reference to the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation is observed. The growing relationship between Zionism and the Holocaust is based on the idea that Israel or *"the Zionists"* do with the Palestinian people the same thing that happened to the Jewish people during the Second World War. These antisemitic accusations range from claims that Zionist Jews were allies of Hitler to claims that Israel uses the same techniques on the Palestinian people that the Nazis used on Jews. This phenomenon is also found in images where Stars of David are equated to swastikas and caricatures in which Israeli leaders are compared to Nazi leaders.

In the Google search engine, a low but constant level of antisemitism is maintained, with a slight increase of 1.8% with respect to the previous year. With a total antisemitism of 4.86%, this type of content is highlighted in the main search results analyzed and a growth in antisemitism for the third consecutive year.

In the case of YouTube -platform that is owned by Google Inc.- there is a slight but steady decline in antisemitism, year after year, among the top search results. But among the antisemitic videos collected, the increase in antisemitic videos related to "the Jewish" stands out with respect to the previous year. These videos contain statements such as "antichrists" Jewish to conspiracies about *"how Jews get their fortunes"*. The theme Zionism is still where most of the antisemitism in that social network is found.

The low and constant level of antisemitism on the two platforms described above may be due to various factors, such as the moderation exercised by Google. Consequently, users migrated to unmoderated platforms, such as Bitchute y 4chan, and a lower positioning -and lower visibility- was received in the search engine, as a result of how the company organizes the content. Although the content often continues to circulate on the Internet, the fact is that it is less accessible to the general public, which a priori can be seen as a positive development, but should not be understood as an indicator that efforts to combat antisemitism on the Internet should decrease.



Conclusions

Commentary forums on the major Internet media portals show a wide disparity in the level of antisemitism of the different countries and digital sites. In general terms, hate content has declined sharply over the past two years. In part, this may be due to less activity on these platforms, replaced by the use of social networks and greater moderation on the part of media companies. The case of Brazil is remarkable, where the antisemitism related to the Holocaust is much common than antisemitism related to Israel, as it is perceived in the rest of the countries analyzed. This is a wake-up call for Holocaust denialism in the Brazilian society.

In the case of Twitter, the conflict in the Middle East had a significant impact on the overall statistics since it is the most relevant phenomenon of 2021. Despite this, there has been a slight decrease in antisemitism in this social network, around 0.90%. Another notable difference with previous years is the marked increase in negative content, largely linked to criticism to Israel. The positive image that Israel achieved related to the efficient management of the health emergency is now in the past. During May 2021, almost 3 million contents were collected, of which 2.2 million were unfavorable. It is clear that the negative image of Israel during the escalation of the war had an impact on society's perception of the Jewish communities. In terms of potential impressions, critical content is the only one whose impression generated exceeds the percentage of content collected, which shows that these types of publications have the greatest reach. In contrast, antisemitic content generates the fewest impressions, with a reach well below the percentage collected.

In Facebook, the same logic of Twitter is repeated. A large proportion of the analyzed content originated during the armed conflict, while the antisemitic content was mostly related to the term "Zionism". In both social networks, the appearance of the concept of "New World Order" is striking, a modern and somewhat modified version of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, antisemitic work that poses a libel of Jewish world domination.



Final comments

Communication is modified as much as societies; but hate speech, unfortunately, remains in force. While relationships between people are regulated by social and state norms, interactions on the Internet must also be governed by democratic rules that respect freedom of expression as well as the right to non-discrimination.

Regarding antisemitism, there is a wide range of speeches and libels, many of which have centuries of history, while others are more recent. When it comes to identifying where these discourses come from on social networks, we find two types of sources. On the one hand, isolated people who demonstrate their hate towards Jews individually and, on the other hand, organized groups whose political platform and main reason for existence is hate of Jews, among other minorities.

Although the problem of antisemitism is verified in much of the world, it is important to note that each region has particular characteristics. The phenomenon of antisemitism in Europe or North America, for example, differs from that manifested in Latin America. In this region, there may be a lower level of physical violence towards Jews and groups organized around hatred of Jews are marginal. However, it is vitally important to remain alert to acts of violence and, especially, to the rise or growth of political groups that preach hateful ideologies.

States, for their part, must promote the creation of environments without discrimination in all aspects of social life, where the Internet stands out as a space of growing importance in terms of the number of interactions that take place there. In this sense, spaces for reflection and educational policies that promote diversity, coexistence and respect must be promoted, not only in schools.

Although social media companies have content moderation policies and moderator teams, these actions are not enough. These companies must be proactive both in self-regulation and in accepting the provisions of the countries in which they are present. The audit of algorithms, as well as campaigns to promote diversity and respect among users of online platforms, must be a central axis of the policy of social media companies. In this regard, non-governmental organizations must also take a proactive role by analyzing the facts, detecting problems, and promoting changes in the platforms that help create safer environments and where the free exercise of people's rights is allowed.

The lack of mechanisms of *accountability* (responsibility) on the Internet is a problem on different levels. While social network companies must be more transparent and accountable to society for the content that is promoted there, the role of non-governmental organizations and States at their different levels is essential when it comes to preventing the spread of antisemitism and other hate speech. Likewise, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), very much in vogue for a few years, is currently crucial. AI algorithms can be used for multiple purposes, such as the development of mechanisms to create early warnings and prevent the spread of hate speech, or tools to moderate, order, rank and prioritize content, even to generate content without direct intervention of human beings. However, even though they sometimes take on a semblance of autonomy or "a life of their own", it is important to understand that AI algorithms have a human basis and a responsibility that originates from who develops them and how. Far from being neutral, they can reproduce or even promote hate on the Internet.



Final comments

The migration of users who promote hate speech to closed web platforms is one of the dangers identified by the Web Observatory. This phenomenon has been seen, inside and outside Latin America, by extreme right-wing groups and groups that spread conspiracies. With varying levels of internal organization, they aim to recruit followers and promote hateful ideologies through social networks. Upon contacting them, they quickly seek to move to Telegram private channels and to social networks without moderation policies that were created to promote hate speech and illegal content.

States should train their justice officials in terms of discrimination and hate speech, as well as provide the necessary tools for the investigation of Internet crimes. In turn, social media companies, must ensure that they provide all information that is required by the courts in order to prosecute hate crimes.

All the data analyzed in this report refer to social networks and open online channels, which can be monitored and measured. Given this trend of migration of some audiences to closed channels and alternative websites to circumvent the content regulation policies adopted by the Internet major companies, it is key to be able to clearly understand the type of content and the volume of information that circulates on these new platforms.

In conclusion, the fight against antisemitism and hate speech on the Internet are a challenge that must be addressed by a multiplicity of actors: states, companies, civil society organizations and the users themselves. The Internet and social networks offer us endless benefits, but we must use them responsibly. From the Web Observatory, we call on each of these actors, with their respective degree of responsibility, to establish a working consensus for the creation of safe spaces free of discrimination on the Internet.



Methodological section

In preparing this report, information was used considering the language and its relevance. Regarding the former, all the material is in Spanish, except for the analysis of comments made in digital media of Brazil. With respect to relevance, we used keywords related to Judaism and Israel. They are obtained from the tool Google Trends, and the requirement is that they have a high volume of searches and are not adjectival (e.g., Israel, Jewish, Holocaust, Zionism).

Google and YouTube: the analyzed content refers to the main search results for the “key” words.

Twitter: Contents in Twitter were collected through the social listening platform. The platform is based on sentimentalization algorithms and artificial intelligence to form the categories analyzed in this report. This tool is complemented by the interpretation work of our analysts.

Facebook: Through the social listening platform, posts containing keywords on the Facebook pages of the main digital media in each country were analyzed. The analyzed pages are: Clarín, La Nación, Infobae, Emol, La Tercera, BioBio, El Tiempo, Las 2 orillas, Pulzo, El Mundo, El País, La Vanguardia, El Observador, El País UY, Portal Montevideo.

Comments in digital media: The following countries were selected on an intentional basis: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Uruguay. The monitored newspapers are Biobio Chile, Clarín, CRHOY, Diario Extra, El Observador, El País, El tiempo, Emol, Folha Sao Pablo, G1, La estrella de Panamá, La Nación, La tercera, Las 2 orillas, Metropoles, Montevideo Portal, Prensa, Subrayado. They were selected based on their relevance according to the ranking prepared by Alexa of the most visited news sites. A sample of the comments of the publications where the same keywords were found was analyzed. It should be noted that the digital portal Infobae does no longer allows comments on its web platform.

Construction of categories and definitions:

- The definition of antisemitism was based on the definition developed by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance): “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”¹¹.
- The category “positive” refers to content that highlights the image of Israel, the Jewish communities, religious traditions, the repudiation of antisemitic acts, the demands for justice for attacks and the memory of the Holocaust.
- It is understood by “negative” the content that legitimately criticizes Israel, trivializes and/or relativizes the Holocaust without this entailing hate speech, and that criticizes the entities of the Jewish communities.

The following report was prepared by Ariel Grosman and Ariel Seidler.

11-<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/es/resources/working-definitions-charters/definicion-del-antisemitismo-de-la-alianza-internacion>





observatorio**web**



The Web Observatory is a joint initiative of the Congreso Judío Latinoamericano (CJL), the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) and the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) that since 2010 has been working against discrimination on the Internet and for a responsible use of technologies. Its mission is to educate on the responsible use of technologies and develop effective strategies to combat online discrimination. We work from a multidisciplinary approach, together with governments, companies linked to the Internet and other NGOs monitoring the web. It prepares the annual report on anti-Semitism on the Internet, and on online discrimination against different groups.