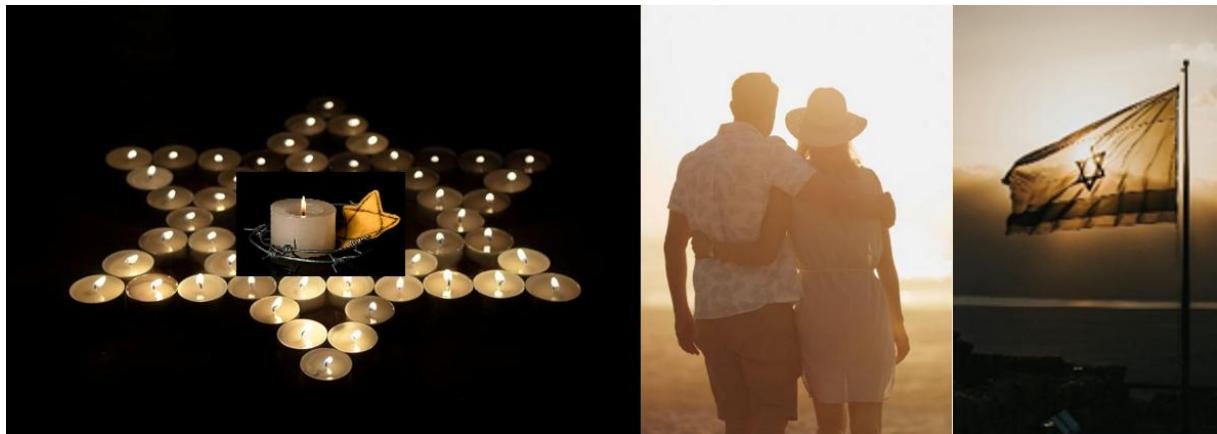




# For the Living

**Part 1: The Holocaust, Auschwitz & Antisemitism 2025**  
**By [Brigitte Chaya Nussbächer](#)**



*81 years have passed since the crimes of the National Socialists. The world swore “Never again”. Yet in 2025, much of the deep sense of remorse has faded, and instead, hatred against Jews has reached a new peak. Why do we not learn from history?*

## Auschwitz



*Final Stop of Humanity: Auschwitz*  
Photo: Shutterstock



*The Horrible Legacy of Auschwitz*  
Photo: Shutterstock

When the Red Army reached Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, the soldiers were confronted with a scene of horror and desolation. Barracks full of corpses, piles of ashes, and evidence of mass murder: gas chambers (some partially destroyed), crematoria, and enormous warehouses filled with stolen belongings — clothing, shoes, eyeglasses, suitcases, and women's shorn hair....

Around 7,500 prisoners were still in the camp, in a state of extreme malnutrition; many were gravely ill, suffering from typhus, diarrhea, or tuberculosis, utterly exhausted or



dying. They had been left behind because they were no longer able to march. All the others — about 58,000 prisoners — had been forced by SS guards onto so-called “death marches” toward the West between January 17 and 23. Thousands perished along the way from exhaustion, cold, or executions.

But even among those who lived to see the day of liberation, many died in the days and weeks that followed, despite medical assistance. Their bodies could no longer process nutrients; their internal organs were severely weakened, and life-saving medicines were scarcely available in the Soviet-liberated territories. Some simply gave up, as the emotional wounds from years of torment and loss were too deep to bear.

Auschwitz was not the first concentration camp to be liberated. When the Red Army reached Majdanek in July 1944, the horrific extent of the Nazi crimes was already beginning to come to light. But Auschwitz was the largest camp complex of the Nazi era — a place that combined forced labor and mass murder on an unprecedented scale. In the extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, more people were systematically and industrially murdered than in any other death camp. Over 1.1 million men, women, and children — deported from almost every country occupied by the Nazis — were killed there. In addition, around one hundred thousand more were forced to perform slave labor under the harshest conditions in the labor camps Auschwitz III-Monowitz and the main camp.

Many of the survivors of the labor camps later testified about their experiences, ensuring that Auschwitz remained present in the world’s collective memory. One of them was the artist Ella Liebermann-Shiber, whose drawings evoke that terrible past — the death cries from the gas chambers, from self-dug graves, the tears of small children, and the screams of mothers whose children were torn from their arms. She was 17 years old when she was liberated.

Sixty years after the crimes, the survivors’ testimonies had finally begun to enter the global consciousness and were being discussed publicly. Because of its scale, its symbolic power, and its international significance, the liberation of Auschwitz was declared the central day of remembrance for the Holocaust by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005.

### Inner Distress



I assume that most of what has been written so far is already familiar to you. By now, we have heard, read, and seen a great deal about it. But has this cognitive awareness led to a deep inner response — has it left traces on our souls?

*Cognitive Awareness or Inner Emotion? Photo: Shutterstock*



Or have we stored this information the way we know that the earth revolves around the sun — as something abstract, something we accept as fact, yet which surpasses our imagination and therefore touches us little? What does the number 1.1 million mean to us? Or six million Jews murdered during the Shoah? Do we see human beings behind these numbers, with their individual fates? Do these numbers take on faces and stories? Do we truly grasp what was destroyed — can we comprehend the extent of the suffering and pain?

I can only speak for myself. For decades, I had collected countless pieces of information on the subject — yet it all remained at the level of cognitive understanding. With cold logic, I evaluated everything that reached me. Most of it I dismissed with a mental note “already known”.

In 2018, we visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. There, in the Hall of Names, I caught my first real glimpse of understanding. I was surrounded by countless faces of extinguished lives. In the underground Children’s Memorial as well, where mirrors and candles are arranged to create the illusion of infinite lights, a monotone voice recites in the darkness the names, ages, and home countries of the 1.5 million murdered children. But it was not until I confronted one individual fate, that the armored glass wall surrounding my soul finally shattered — through Ellie Midwood’s novel *“The Violinist of Auschwitz”*, based on the true story of Alma Rosé. The musician tried to give strength to people in Auschwitz through music, and to save them from the gas chambers — until she herself no longer had the strength to live. It is a heavy, unflinching book that brings the unparalleled horror of daily life in Auschwitz frighteningly close, in hundreds of facets. It was not easy to read - deeply unsettling and haunting - yet it was essential to learn to understand and to empathize. Further biographies of survivors continued to give greater depth to the inner image that had begun to form.

To gain some sense of what Holocaust survivors had to deal with, even after liberation, I ask you now to think of a person who is very close to you. Recall a few of the wonderful moments you have shared with them. Think of all their abilities, their potential. Feel, once again, just how dear and valuable they are to you. Is this person now standing before your mind’s eye? Do you see them clearly and distinctly - the sparkle in their eyes, the smile on their face? Embrace them in your thoughts.

Now the film abruptly tears. Suddenly, everything is black. The beloved person is gone — forever; murdered simply for being who they were. You will never see her smile again. She will never sit across from you; you will never embrace her again. She will be missing from every detail of your daily life. You will think of her a thousand times a day, but only painful emptiness surrounds you. And now imagine it is not just one person. Imagine that, in this way, everyone around you, whom you love and who enriches your life, disappears, wiped out by a murderous, annihilating hand. In the end, all that remains around you is darkness. No life left.

Can you still feel this? Or has your heart turned to ice? Can you grasp a fraction of the cutting loneliness of Holocaust survivors? And this is only one aspect. Added to this are



the horrifying memories of atrocities they were forced to witness and endure every day, memories that flare up again and again.

Let us think of the six million murdered, of the millions who mourned them, and of the survivors - not as strangers, but as people whose pain we can try to share. Think of them with love and empathy, as you just thought of your own beloved person. Only when we allow ourselves to feel the loss and pain caused by their murder does remembrance gain depth. And as we feel this, we remember that it was Germany, that led this horrifying war campaign.

But let us also look to the more recent past and remember all victims of terror (5,247) and soldiers (25,617) who have been killed since the founding of Israel, because Israel's right to exist continues to be bitterly contested. In total there are almost 31,000.

### **Flowers for the Living**



*Flowers as a Symbolic Gesture Photo: Private*

In Israel, on Holocaust Remembrance Day — **Yom HaShoah**, which has been observed here since 1951 in the Hebrew month of Nisan (around April) — there are always two minutes of silence. Sirens wail, and the entire country comes to a standstill. Cars on the highways stop; everyone pauses whatever they are doing. This is how Israelis honor their dead and pray for the families of the victims. At Yad Vashem, six torches are lit for the six million, and all flags are flown at half-mast.

A week later, **Yom HaZikaron** is observed, the day of remembrance for fallen Israeli soldiers and victims of terrorism. Again, sirens sound, flags are lowered, and the nation remembers those who sacrificed their lives so that Israel could live in freedom. But do you know what comes directly after these two days of mourning and remembrance?

**Yom HaAtzmaut**, Independence Day. On the evening that marks the transition to this day in Israel, mourning turns into joy — joy for sovereignty, for life, and for the survival of the Jewish people.

During the Holocaust, the words of the Shema Yisrael rose from the gas chambers and from the death camps. Hundreds of thousands died with these words on their lips: the confession of faith of the Jews: Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, is One. A prayer that was not answered? Or was it, ultimately, this return to God, this prayer spoken millions of times, that in the spiritual realm paved the way for the birth of the State of Israel?



And so, like the Israelis, we do not wish to remain only in mourning and remembrance. We do not want merely to lay wreaths on graves; rather, we want to fulfill the promise of “Never again” in concrete terms for the living, for the survivors. By giving them flowers in a metaphorical sense, as a sign of life and of our solidarity. By standing with them. This shall be our motto in January 2026.

### The Spiral of History



For all too often, one can observe that while wreaths are laid solemnly for the dead Jews, the living Jews — Israelis and Israel itself — are condemned and sanctioned by the very same people.

And this is not about blindly approving everything a Jew or Israel does. Rather, it is about not automatically attributing negative intentions, measuring by a double standard, or assuming from the outset that Israel is in the wrong.

*Why Don't We Learn from History? Photo: Shutterstock*

It is so alarming these days to see how many continue the legacy of anti-Jewish propaganda from the time of the National Socialists. How they appoint themselves as judges from afar and impose sanctions, without having learned anything from history, with a fatal ignorance of the situation on the ground, yet full of self-righteous know-it-all attitudes, arrogant superiority, and double standards.

They ignore the fact that this very mindset has had catastrophic consequences in the past.

In the **Middle Ages**, Jews were accused of poisoning wells and sacrificing small children. The result was that Jews were persecuted, expelled, and murdered. The pogroms of the Middle Ages were brutally violent. Today, we know that none of these accusations were true. But what use is this knowledge to those who suffered back then?

During the era of **National Socialism**, Jews were accused of harboring secret plans to take over the world — at the expense of national states. *Der Stürmer* and other publications reported on this every week. Six million Jews were executed by the Nazis — with at least passive assistance from other states — for these alleged crimes: shot in mass graves, gassed, and burned. Fifteen years later, it was clear that the accusation had no basis. But what value did this realization have for the six million who were no longer alive?

Since **December 29, 2023**, Israel has been accused of committing genocide in Gaza — first by South Africa, and then by an increasing number of states. Almost the entire



world condemns Israel for so-called humanitarian crimes. Media outlets such as *Tagesschau* report on this weekly. “Surprisingly”, despite undeniable suffering, the population in Gaza has not decreased, as would be expected in the case of genocide. In twenty years, when independent investigations can be conducted, it will become clear that this accusation is also baseless. But what is the value of this insight then?

Will we again spend decades expressing remorse in many words (and fewer deeds)? Will we once more swear “Never Again” — only to condemn again at the next opportunity?

**Antisemitism**, by definition, is the attitude of attributing negative qualities and actions to Jews in order to justify their devaluation, exclusion, discrimination, and condemnation. It does not begin with deeds. It begins with thoughts, with the willingness to accept negative reports uncritically. And if no one opposes it, it leads to horrific crimes.

## Antisemitism 2025

Since October 7, 2023, antisemitism (or more precisely expressed Jew hatred) has spread rapidly. The sad truth, however, is that it was never gone - not even in Germany. On this topic, there is a 2018 analysis by the well-known publicist Arye Sharuz Shalicar titled “*Der neudeutsche Antisemit*” (*The New German Antisemite*). The author, an Iranian Jew, grew up in Berlin. He identifies traces of antisemitism across all social classes and political parties. It is a book that provokes deep reflection — both alarming and sobering.



Since 2005, there has been a transnational political campaign called “**Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions**” (**BDS**), which seeks to economically, culturally, and politically isolate the State of Israel. It has supporters in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Leading BDS representatives openly deny Israel’s right to exist, and the organization’s ultimate goal is the end of the one Jewish state of Israel.

*BDS – Over 20 Years Active Against Israel*

*Photo: Shutterstock*

**Cultural boycotts** pressure individuals and ensembles from third countries to cancel their performances in Israel or exclude Israel entirely. One recalls the heated debates over whether Israel should be allowed to participate in the Eurovision Song Contest, starting in 2024 and continuing to today; or the disinitation of the Munich Philharmonic from the Flanders Festival in 2025, simply because their conductor, Lahav Shavi, was born in Israel. Even Robin Williams’ concert in Istanbul last fall was canceled - because his wife is Jewish. European universities canceled events with Israeli speakers,



suspended or froze cooperation agreements or framework contracts with certain Israeli universities. The Vuelta a España 2025 cycling race was interrupted due to anti-Israel protests. Israel was excluded from the International Tourism Fair in Rimini, Italy, and the International Defense and Security Exhibition in Madrid, Spain, to name just a few examples.

**Divestment measures**, such as selling shares, target companies, organizations, and projects that invest in any way in Israel — and, naturally, Israel itself. For example, in the summer of 2025, the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund sold its shares in Israeli companies and terminated external asset management contracts in Israel. In the UK, several resolutions were passed by unions and university committees to stop investing public funds in certain companies or Israeli government bonds.



**UN resolutions** have condemned Israel for years more frequently than all the dictatorships in the world combined. No other country is put under such scrutiny so often. This is ensured by the permanent Agenda Item 7 in the Human Rights Council, which deals exclusively with the “human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.”

*UN Vote in the General Assembly Photo: Shutterstock*

Whether it concerns Israel’s 1960 operation to smuggle the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann out of Argentina to stand trial in Israel, or Israel’s right to defend itself against threats from terrorist organizations, there are repeatedly two-thirds majorities among the 193 UN member states condemning Israel.

**Demonstrations** calling for a Palestinian state “from the river to the sea” - that is, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, meaning in place of, rather than alongside, Israel - take place without consequence in European capitals and at American universities. In 2025 alone, hundreds of thousands participated: 225,000 in Sydney in August, 100,000 in Berlin in September, and in October, 250,000 in Amsterdam and 300,000 in Rome.



*Worldwide Anti-Israel Demonstrations Photo: Shutterstock*

The number of antisemitic incidents has skyrocketed since October 7 - in Germany, for example, by about 80% compared to 2023. In Berlin alone, over 1,500 anti-Jewish actions were recorded within six months. By autumn 2025, the first shops and restaurants were once again putting up signs reading “Jews not allowed.” Worldwide, these incidents — ranging from violence and property damage to occupations and even murder - have reached their highest level since World War II.

Much of this is fueled by **mainstream media**. Many outlets adopt figures and narratives directly from Hamas and Hezbollah, as if terrorist organizations were reliable sources.



The usual disclaimer, that this data cannot be independently verified, is a cynical way of positioning themselves as “objective” reporters. The poison of these one-sided, incomplete, and sometimes outright false narratives, reaching millions every day, spreads into the minds of the public. Israel is defamed as the aggressor, while background and context for its actions are omitted. Those who do not proactively and responsibly seek information from multiple sources almost inevitably become critics of Israel.

**Weapons embargoes** against Israel have been demanded by Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Algeria, China, Iran, and Russia, and imposed by Slovenia and Spain. France called for a European weapons embargo. The German governments of recent years promised much but delivered far less. All this has occurred while Israel has been defending itself in a multi-front war - against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and Iran, to name those who have carried out regular and intense attacks on Israel over the past two years. In addition, Iranian-funded paramilitary militias in Iraq and Syria, as well as terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria, have also targeted Israel.

In January of last year, I published an article entitled “[500 DAYS! The Development of Global Public Opinion Since October 7, 2023](#)” which chronologically follows events and highlights the increasing alienation of the world from Israel.



On December 29, 2023, South Africa filed a **lawsuit against Israel** at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, accusing Israel of “genocide against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip.” Chile, Colombia, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Palestine, Spain, and Turkey joined the lawsuit.

*The International Court of Justice in The Hague*  
Photo: Shutterstock

Both the evidence Israel has since provided regarding protective measures for the civilian population, as well as the documentation of the large amounts of aid delivered to Gaza, are being ignored.

In November 2024, **arrest warrants** were issued against Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Gallant, as requested by the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan. This equates a democratically elected prime minister, who led his country to unprecedented prosperity for over a decade, with a globally wanted terrorist and criminal, for whom millions in bounty are offered.



*Karim Khan. Photo Shutterstock*

On May 28, 2024, Norway, Spain, and Ireland **recognized a Palestinian state** without Israel’s consent. In September 2025, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, Portugal, Malta, Monaco, Belgium, Luxembourg, San Marino, and Andorra followed suit.



Israel, which in October 2025 was still fighting for the liberation of 48 hostages, who have been held captive by Hamas for over 700 days, is globally isolated in a way reminiscent of the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

In 2026, 81 years after the end of the Holocaust, there is no reason to proudly claim that antisemitism has been eradicated. Instead, one must ask with genuine concern how it is possible that the condemnation and exclusion of Jews are celebrated worldwide, while the last eyewitnesses of the Shoah are still among us. Witnessing the stunned horror of Holocaust survivors in light of current events makes it clear how the world has abandoned these people a second time and bears guilt toward them.

It would be too much for this article to delve into the origins and background of this hatred, which has persisted through the millennia. But there is an excellent book on the subject: “Holocaust – The History of Hatred and Persecution Against God’s People” by Susanna Kokkonen. I know of no other work that goes as deeply into this topic. The author combines biblical and historical perspectives, tracing hostility toward Jews back to biblical beginnings and the early years of Christianity. This is a book that opens your eyes to how deeply antisemitic patterns are embedded in our thinking, our cultures, and even within Christian circles – and helps you to put them off. This book is an absolute MUST-READ.

*Looking back over the last 2,000 years of history, the struggle against hatred of Jews can seem hopeless. And yet, throughout the centuries, there have always been sparks of light and, above all, bearers of hope: men and women who showed extraordinary courage to uphold human values and stood up for the Jewish people — the Friends of Zion, the Righteous Among the Nations.*

*Continue reading in [Part 2](#).*