



Coronavirus Antisemitism Briefing n. 1 – 30 April 2020

The Coronavirus Briefings, the first of which is presented hereby, analyze the development of the antisemitic hate speech connected to the Coronavirus crisis. This project, managed by Sammy Eppel, political analyst, is a common effort of the Kantor Center and its partners around the world. Among the contributors of this briefing, special thanks to: CST (Community and Security Trust); DAIA (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas); Dr. Zbyněk Tarant, University of West Bohemia; ADL (Anti-Defamation League); SACC (Security And Crisis Centre) at the EJC (European Jewish Congress).

Executive Summary

- The Coronavirus pandemic has caused a global crisis that is fertile ground for conspiracy theories mixed with hatred. Extreme right, extreme left, and Islamists have sought to make sense of all this according to their worldviews, routinely accusing states, peoples, or industries to be the mastermind behind the pandemic and the consequent crisis.
- In this context, the usual antisemitic tropes are adapted to the Coronavirus narrative, portraying Jews as the plague-spreaders, Zionists as evil profiteers of the crisis, and Israelis as wicked bio-criminals against the Palestinians.
- Iran consistently promotes anti-Israeli propaganda tainted with antisemitic tropes, such as accusing Israel of inventing the virus and deliberately propagating it among Palestinians. Disseminated in South America through media outlets in Spanish, such propaganda is occasionally elaborated on by extreme left groups in Europe.
- The extreme right discourse accuses Jews of having created and propagated the virus for economic profit. Additionally, both occultists and Coronavirus-sceptics believe that the measures introduced to counter the pandemic are conducive to Jewish world domination.
- Zoom-bombing has increasingly become a new modus operandi of neo-Nazis in their attacks against Jewish gatherings online.

State-promoted antisemitism

Iran and South America

- The Iranian regime disseminates its propaganda in South America through diverse media channels, including the Venezuela-based HispanTV, which also includes antisemitic discourse such as The Protocols, The Universal Jew, The Blood libel, Holocaust denial and anti-Zionism. Since the onset of the COVID-19, HispanTV has parroted the Iranian narrative of an Israel-Jewish conspiracy, in an effort to create an antisemitic opinion matrix.
- HispanTV has systematically propagated the Iranian propaganda on the Coronavirus accusing Israel and the Zionists of masterminding the pandemic. Since the inception

of the crisis in March, a number of articles spread demonizing news: [the virus was invented by the US and Israel](#) as a weapon designed against Iranians; [Israel voluntarily infects Palestinian detainees](#) and [Israelis attack Palestinians](#) in an [effort to spread the contagion](#); Israel is [deliberately compromising Palestinians' efforts to counter the virus](#). In the attempt to delegitimize Israel, several articles claim that the Jewish State is taking advantage of the current crisis for [pursuing](#) its [expansionist policies](#) and [other alleged crimes](#) against the Palestinians.

The Extreme Left

Anti-Israel Groups in South America

- The accusations circulated by the Iranian propaganda in Spanish were later picked up by anti-Israeli groups in South America, such as: the false allegation of Israel [propagating the virus among Palestinian prisoners](#) and [thwarting the Palestinian Authority's policies](#) against the pandemic.

The Basque extreme left

- The accusation against the US and Israel of creating and spreading the virus was also published by the Iran-backed Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah, through its media outlet al-Manar in Spanish. Coupled with HispanTV propaganda, these conspiracy theories were endorsed by the extreme left, anarchic group "Herritar Batasuna," which promotes Basque anti-imperialist narrative, and portrays the pandemic as [an American, British, and Israeli war on humanity](#) and the working classes.

The Extreme Right

Jewish domination, conspiracy theories and esotericism

- Among the antisemitic conspiracy theories, the most common trope is that of Jewish plotting to dominate the world. The Czech Internet site "Aeronet" published a piece claiming that the Coronavirus pandemic is a [Jewish conspiracy to bring about the New World Order](#), attributed to the Rothschilds, via future anti-Covid19 vaccinations that will install devices to control individuals. Traditional antisemitic tropes such as Jewish bankers and Judeo-masonry were also employed. The article refers to the general conspiracy theory that the Coronavirus is somehow linked to radiations coming from cellular phones, a belief common also in other countries.

Soros and the Coronavirus as a Jewish disease

- The [CST analysis "Covid-19 & the Far Right: Emerging Narratives"](#) has explored the links between Coronavirus crisis and different narratives such as conspiracy theories and anti-migrant slogans. The [ADL has showed](#) that anti-Jewish conspiracy theories accuse Jews of profiting from the crisis and of being themselves a plague.
- In Germany, promoters of conspiracy theories also endorse the same anti-Jewish narrative that describe Jews as plague-spreaders. Some networks have [accused George Soros](#) of being responsible for the pandemic: being Jewish, he is an easy target for those extreme right-wing conspiracy theories that attribute all evils to the "Jewish capital."
- Likewise, the Argentinian blog "infoconnoticias" has published a number of posts that describe the measures enacted to confront the pandemic as an [attempt to control people by occult forces](#), accusing [Jews of creating the virus](#) and George Soros of

propagating it and [aiming to destroy the family](#) as a social institution. The [DAIA institute in Buenos Aires has analyzed](#) the impact of the crisis on antisemitism emphasizing online hate speech accusing Jews of spreading the virus.

“Holocough,” incitement to violence and Zoom-bombing

- Holocaust abuse is a wide phenomenon that acquires new forms during the current pandemic. The neologism “Holocough,” combining Holocaust and cough, is used by extreme right activists, mainly in the U.S., to promote the idea that the pandemic is a bluff invented to promote interests of, alternatively, Jews, Zionists, or Israelis. A number of Twitter posts under the hashtag “#[Holocough](#)” promote the idea that the counter-measures against the pandemic are a form of conspiracy.
- Neo-Nazis and white supremacist activists have been inciting to propagate the virus among Jews, also through the slogan “If you have the bug, give a hug. Spread the flu to every Jew” on social media. Another form of violence is the Zoom-bombing, consisting of hacking meetings held on the Zoom platform. In Germany, on two occasions, neo-Nazi activists broke into a meeting where a [Holocaust survivor was giving her testimony](#) on April 21, and into a [Torah lesson](#) on April 23.