

Wiesenthal Center releases top 10 anti-Semitic incidents of 2014

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(RNS) Hoping to draw more attention to the global problem of attacks against Jews and Judaism, the Simon Wiesenthal Center on Monday (December 29) released its list of the top 10 worst anti-Semitic and anti-Israel incidents of 2014.

The list can “bring focus to the fact that anti-Semitism has been increasingly manifest in the mainstream of society,” said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the center, which is named for the famed Holocaust survivor and Nazi hunter.

“Anti-Semitism is not just a Jewish problem, and it certainly is not going to get solved without awakening the non-Jewish world to deal with it.”

Founded in 1977 to combat anti-Semitism and bigotry in general, the Los Angeles-based center started drawing up the annual list in 2010 to highlight prejudice against Jews, but also criticism of Israel that seeks to delegitimize or demonize the Jewish state.

The three worst incidents on this year’s list are:

1. The Belgian doctor who refused to treat a 90-year-old Jewish woman in pain, saying: “Send her to Gaza for a few hours, then she will get rid of the pain.”
2. The members of Jordan’s parliament who called for a moment of silence to honor the militants who murdered four rabbis at prayer in a Jerusalem synagogue, saying they wanted to glorify the killers’ “pure souls and the souls of all the martyrs in the Arab and Muslim nations.”
3. The assailants who raped a 19-year-old Jewish woman during a home invasion and robbery of a Jewish family’s home in a Paris suburb. They demanded: “Tell us where you hid the money . . . You Jews always have money.”

Six of the 10 incidents on the list this year took place in Europe, where Jewish leaders have been particularly alarmed by rising incidents of anti-Semitism, including attacks on synagogues and Jewish businesses, and assaults on Jews in the streets.

The U.S. claimed two of the last three spots on the list:

8. Steven Salaita, the professor who lost an employment offer at the University of Illinois, after tweeting (among other comments about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza): "At this point if Netanyahu appeared with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anybody be surprised?"

9. The killer of three non-Jews at the Jewish Community Center in Overland Park, Kansas remarked: "Wanted to make damned sure I killed some Jews . . . before I died."

Earlier this month another major group founded to counter anti-Semitism, the New York-based Anti-Defamation League, released its "Top 10 Issues Affecting Jews in 2014."