

# THE NETHERLANDS 2022 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

## Executive Summary

The constitution prohibits religious discrimination and protects the freedom of individuals to profess their religion or belief. It is a crime to engage in public speech inciting religious hatred. The constitution allows the government to restrict the exercise of religious beliefs outside of buildings or enclosed spaces to protect health, ensure traffic safety, and prevent disorder. The law bans full-face coverings, including niqabs and burqas as well as nonreligious attire such as ski masks and helmets, in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. Authorities rarely enforced the law banning full-face coverings in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. Local and national security officials said they continued to work with Jewish and Muslim communities to increase security at religious sites. During the year, politicians from some political parties made statements against Islam protected by constitutional provisions on free speech.

In August, the government officially recognized Scientology as a religion. The decision came after a review, initiated in 2013, of the financial flows and activities of the Church of Scientology. On August 30, the tax office rendered the decision that all activities of the church are to be considered beneficial to the public at large and thereby confirmed the religious activities and practices of the church. In September, far-right opposition Member of Parliament (MP) Pepijn van Houwelingen tweeted a digitally altered image of two government ministers with a Nazi flag; governing coalition leaders, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, condemned the tweet and a key coalition MP filed a complaint against van Houwelingen with the Parliamentary Investigation and Integrity Board. Government Ministers spoke out against antisemitism. In October, Minister of Justice and Security Dilan Yesilgoz reiterated her predecessor's announcement that Holocaust denial would explicitly become a punishable offense under the law and reported the government is working on such a bill. Also in October, the National Coordinator for Combatting Antisemitism (NCAB) published a four-year strategic workplan for 2022-2025. In January, the NCAB became a permanent government office as part of the government coalition agreement, with a structural baseline funding of €500,000 (\$534,000) per year.

Government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) continued to report hundreds of anti-Muslim and antisemitic incidents involving nonlethal violence, threats, harassment, discrimination, hate speech, and vandalism, although the data collected by agencies often differed because of varied reporting, collection, and analysis methods.

Officials from the U.S. embassy and the consulate general emphasized the importance of supporting all faiths and engaging in interfaith dialogue in both formal meetings and informal conversations with government officials from multiple ministries and with parliamentarians. Embassy and consulate general representatives discussed religious freedom issues with leaders of several different faith communities and a broad range of civil society groups. U.S. officials met with the Dutch Jewish Council (CJO) and the Jewish Cultural Quarter regarding cooperation with the Jewish community on Holocaust restitution and reparations efforts.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

The Netherlands, along with the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten, form the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The U.S. government estimates the total population of the Netherlands at 17.4 million (midyear 2022). In a 2021 survey, the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS), the official source for government statistics, reported that 57 percent of the population age 15 or older in the Netherlands declared no religious affiliation, 18 percent identified as Roman Catholic, 14 percent as Protestant, 5 percent as Muslim, and 6 percent, including Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, and Baha'is, as "other."

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Curacao at 152,000 (midyear 2022). According to 2011 census data, 72.8 percent of the population in Curacao identified as Roman Catholic, 18.4 percent another denomination of Christianity, 2.3 percent another religion (including Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, Jewish, and "other"), and 6.0 percent not religious.

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Aruba at 122,000 (midyear 2022). According to 2010 census data, 75.3 percent of the population in Aruba

identified as Roman Catholic, 4.9 percent Protestant, 1.7 percent Jehovah's Witness, 12 percent "other," 5.5 percent "none," and 0.5 percent "unspecified."

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Sint Maarten at 45,000 (midyear 2022). According to 2011 census data, 41.9 percent of the population in Sint Maarten identified as Protestant, 33.1 percent Roman Catholic, 5.2 percent Hindu, 4.1 percent another denomination of Christianity, 1.7 percent Jehovah's Witness, 1.7 percent Evangelical, 1.4 percent Muslim or Jewish, 1.3 percent "other," 7.9 percent "none," and 2.4 percent "no response."

Most Muslims in the Netherlands live in urban areas and are of Turkish, Moroccan, or Surinamese descent. The Muslim population also includes recent immigrants and asylum seekers from other countries, including Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. While there are no official estimates, most Muslims are believed to be Sunni. The Reform Jewish Congregation, the largest Jewish community in the country, estimates there are 40,000-50,000 Jews. A CBS study from 2015 (the most recent available) estimates the number of Hindus at 10,000, of whom approximately 85 percent are of Surinamese descent and 10 percent of Indian descent. The Buddhist community has approximately 17,000 members, according to a 2007 report by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, the most recent Dutch estimate available. Boston University's World Religion Database estimates there are 207,000 Buddhists in the country (1.2 percent of the population).

## **Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom**

### **Legal Framework**

The constitution prohibits discrimination on religious grounds and provides for the freedom of individuals to profess their religion or belief, individually or in community with others, provided it does not affect their responsibilities under the law. The constitution allows the government to restrict the exercise of religious belief outside of buildings or enclosed spaces to protect health, ensure traffic safety, and prevent disorder.

The law makes it a crime to engage in public speech that incites religious hatred and provides a penalty of imprisonment for up to two years, a fine of up to €8,100

(\$8,700), or both. To qualify as hate speech, statements must be directed at a group of persons; the law does not consider statements targeted at a philosophy or religion, such as “Islam” (as opposed to “Muslims”), to be criminal hate speech.

The law does not require religious groups to register with the government. Under the law, if the tax authorities determine a group is “of a philosophical or religious nature,” contributes to the general welfare of society, and is nonprofit and nonviolent, they grant it exemptions from all taxes, including income, value-added, and property taxes.

The law bans full-face coverings – including niqabs and burqas, as well as other nonreligious attire such as ski masks and helmets – in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. According to the law, authorities must first ask individuals violating the ban to remove the face covering or to leave the premises. Those refusing to comply may be fined €150 euros (\$160).

The law permits employees to refuse to work on Sundays for religious reasons, but employers may deny employees such an exception depending on the nature of the work, such as employment in the health sector. Members of religious communities for whom the day of worship is not Sunday may request similar exemptions.

Local governments appoint antidiscrimination boards that work independently under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations. These local boards provide information on how to report complaints and mediate disputes, including those pertaining to discrimination based on religion.

The Council of State and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR) are responsible for reviewing complaints of religious discrimination. The Council of State is the highest administrative court in the country, and its rulings are binding. The NIHR serves as the government’s independent human rights watchdog, responsible for advising the government and monitoring and highlighting such issues, including those pertaining to religion. The NIHR hears complaints of religious discrimination, often involving labor disputes, and issues opinions that do not carry the force of law but with which the involved parties tend to comply. If respondents do not comply with NIHR’s opinion, complainants may take their case to a regular court. Local boards do not have the final say with parties involved in disputes unless the parties accept a board’s decision.

The government provides funding to religious schools, other religious educational institutions, and religious healthcare facilities. To qualify for funding, institutions must meet government educational standards as well as minimum class size and healthcare requirements. The constitution says standards required of religious or ideology-based (termed “special”) schools, financed either in part or fully by the government, shall be regulated by law with due regard for the freedom of these schools to provide education according to their religion or ideology.

The constitution stipulates public education shall pay due respect to the individual’s religion or belief. The law permits, but does not require, religious education in public schools. Teachers with relevant training approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science teach classes about a specific religion or its theology in some public schools, and enrollment in these classes is optional. All schools are required to familiarize students with the various religious movements in society, regardless of the school’s religious affiliation. Religion-based schools that are government funded are free to determine the content of their religious classes and make them mandatory, provided the education inspectorate agrees that such education does not incite criminal offenses such as inciting hate speech or action. Approximately 71 percent of government-funded schools have a religious, humanist, or philosophical basis. The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science is responsible for setting national curriculum standards with which all schools must comply and for monitoring compliance.

Courts may issue fines and arrest warrants against a spouse who refuses to give the other spouse a religious divorce.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### **Government Practices**

In August, the country officially recognized Scientology as a religion. The decision came after an extensive review, begun in 2013, of the financial flows and activities of the church. On August 30, the tax office rendered the decision that all activities of the Church of Scientology are to be considered beneficial to the public at large and thereby confirmed the religious activities and practices of the church.

In June, two MPs from the governing coalition and the opposition co-sponsored a resolution to increase criminal penalties for hate crimes by one-third. The bill generated generally positive coverage and discussion, but parliament had not adopted it as of year's end.

An October 2021 report by an investigative journalist revealed that at least 10 municipalities conducted undercover investigations into mosques in their cities in recent years. Rotterdam, Eindhoven, and Zoetermeer, among others, sent researchers from a private company to Islamic organizations to retrieve sensitive information without making themselves known. The National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) reportedly paid for the investigations; legal experts cited in the report suggested the actions violated the law. Investigations and efforts by the government to address what prominent religious and community leaders described as the "damaged trust" caused by these undercover investigations continued in 2022.

In September, far-right opposition MP Pepijn van Houwelingen tweeted a digitally altered image of two government ministers with a Nazi flag; governing coalition leaders, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, condemned the tweet, and a key coalition MP filed a formal complaint against van Houwelingen with the Parliamentary Investigation and Integrity Board.

Authorities said the government continued working with various Muslim communities to reinforce their "resilience" against Salafist doctrine, including meeting with community representatives to discuss challenges faced by mosques, providing training on how to recognize signs of radicalization, and supporting Muslim youth exposed to polarization, radicalization, and extremism.

The national police reported that authorities had not issued any fines during the year to women wearing a burqa under the law banning full-face coverings in schools, hospitals, public transportation, and government buildings. When the law banning full-face covering passed in 2019, the government said it would re-evaluate it in 2022. According to an August report in the Dutch press, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Welfare commissioned an evaluation that revealed that the Dutch police had not issued a single fine under the law since its implementation. In September, the Amsterdam city council voted in favor of a

motion to withdraw the ban “as soon as possible.” At year’s end, authorities had not issued any fines under the ban, but the ban officially remains in effect.

During a November 1 interview, the national coordinator against racism and discrimination within the police, Commissioner Johan van Renswoude, said that a police officer should be able to wear a headscarf or other religious symbol at work.

The Central Body for Accommodating Asylum Seekers, the agency charged with overseeing asylum centers, said it prohibited religious proselytizing in the centers to avoid inflaming tensions among different religious groups housed together in an already sensitive environment. Other than inside the asylum centers, the government permitted proselytizing within society.

Local and national authorities, the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, and police said they consulted closely on security issues with representatives from religious communities. Local governments, in consultation with the national government, continued to provide security to all Jewish institutions. The volunteer organization For Life and Welfare said it also provided private security to Jewish institutions and events.

Local governments continued to provide security to mosques and Islamic institutions as necessary, and local authorities worked with Islamic institutions on enhancing the security of mosques and other religious institutes, as well as their visitors. The national government continued to support this local approach and developed materials to assist religious institutes and local governments in implementing such measures. The national government continued to disseminate the 2019 *Security of Religious Institutes* manual, created in consultation with the Muslim community, local governments, and police.

The government continued to require imams and other spiritual leaders recruited from abroad to complete a course on integrating into Dutch society before preaching in the country. Prior to 2022, this requirement did not apply to clergy from EU countries and countries with association agreements with the EU. In January, regulatory changes approved the previous year came into effect, requiring Turkish imams to complete the civic integration course as well. The

government continued to sponsor leadership courses intended to facilitate imam training in Dutch.

In September, National Coordinator on Racism and Discrimination Rabin Baldewsingh presented the country's first National Program against Discrimination and Racism to Minister of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations Hanke Bruins Slot. The program sets out what the government would do to reduce discrimination and racism in Dutch society. Baldewsingh advocated for allowing police officers and police assistants to wear headscarves if they wish to do so for religious reasons, stating that "the idea that they would not be able to perform their duties impartially I find incorrect and unnecessarily stigmatizing." He also announced a major investigation into discrimination against Muslims.

On October 6, Minister of Justice and Security Dilan Yesilgoz sent the first action plan of the NCAB to the House of Representatives. The plan is the starting point for concrete actions in the fight against antisemitism and outlines a three-pillar approach. The first pillar relates to tracking antisemitic incidents and developments in this area, while the second pillar focuses on raising awareness, for example through lessons in school. The third pillar emphasizes commemorating and celebrating Jewish life.

In an October 30 speech, Minister Yesilgoz said the cabinet was preparing a bill that would explicitly ban the condoning, denial, or gross trivialization of the Holocaust. Noting the rise of antisemitic expression and incidents, Yeşilgoz said, "We have to draw a line" and indicated stricter action needs to be taken against online hate messages as well as proclamations in soccer stadiums. The Minister warned, "Step by step, Jew-hatred seems to be becoming salient. Antisemites seem to express it less and less covertly. People are no longer even ashamed of it." While the law has provisions that would effectively outlaw such speech, there is no explicit mention of antisemitism in the implementing regulations.

Government ministers, including Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Foreign Minister Hoekstra, spoke out against antisemitism in speeches, such as at the annual Auschwitz and Kristallnacht commemorations.

In January, the NCAB became a permanent government office as part of the government coalition agreement; the agreement also committed to providing



increased resources for countering antisemitism. The national budget ultimately provided a structural budget of €500,000 (\$534,000). In October, the NCAB published its first strategic workplan 2022-2025, identifying three main pillars of strategic action for the coming years: monitoring and follow-up, education and prevention, and commemoration and celebration. Much of the NCAB's efforts in 2022 focused on continuing programming from previous years with the remaining funds allocated from 2019-2021, while preparing the strategic workplan for the subsequent four years.

The government continued to fund projects to counter antisemitism but without the €1 million (\$1.1 million) per year allocated for 2019-2021. The office of the NCAB is seeking to reinstate a fixed budget for such projects. Current antisemitism projects funded include a Jewish Police Network program to train police to better recognize antisemitism.

Government and security officials reported they met throughout the year with the Jewish community to discuss matters of concern, such as security, antisemitism, and animal slaughter. The CJO, Netherlands-Jewish Congregation, Netherlands Alliance of Progressive Judaism, Christian NGO Only Jesus Christian Ministries (OJCM), and NGO Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) took part in these meetings.

On July 1, an Amsterdam court sentenced a man who made insulting comments about Jews during a September 2011 radio show to 40 hours of community service and a fine. The court found the man guilty of public and verbal intentional group insult based on race and origin for expressing a series of antisemitic statements on air, including that Jews instigated the Holocaust themselves.

The country is a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA); the government continued to state it accepted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism but that it was not legally bound by it. The government said it shared indicators from this definition with police and the Public Prosecutor's Office so they could take the indicators into account when dealing with incidents of antisemitism. The government said it used the IHRA definition as a practical tool for registration and detection of criminal offenses that could have a discriminatory element.

The Anne Frank Foundation continued to organize government-sponsored and government-funded projects, such as the “Fair Play” project, which promoted discussion about countering discrimination, including religious discrimination, among soccer fans, particularly youth and young adults. The foundation also provided materials for teaching about antisemitism in schools and a virtual library to showcase stories of youth who had experienced discrimination, including antisemitism.

On January 30, speakers at the annual national Holocaust remembrance event spoke out against the use of comparisons between the Holocaust and restrictions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema, citing the wearing of the Star of David by some during protests in the city, said the use was “shameful.” Jacques Grishaver, chair of the Dutch Auschwitz Committee, which organized the commemoration, asserted this false comparison could lead to attacks and a “pogrom” against the Jewish community. Participants included Prime Minister Mark Rutte, President of the Senate Jan Anthonie Bruijn, and President of the House of Representatives Vera Bergkamp, who said in her remarks the new Holocaust Memorial of Names in Amsterdam gave victims their identity back.

In March, the Public Prosecution Service (OM) stated that leader of the political party Forum for Democracy (FvD) Thierry Baudet’s July 2021 statements did not constitute a criminal offense and that it would not prosecute him because of his comparison between Jews and unvaccinated persons. The OM reported Baudet’s statements were “magnifying the inconvenience of the corona(virus) measures” and not at “playing down the Holocaust” and that the statements did not incite “hatred or violence.” Baudet originally tweeted, “For anyone wondering how things went in the 1930s/40s, which witnessed the exclusion of population groups and a step-by-step increase in totalitarian state control, for anyone wondering where he/she would have been at that time, now is your chance to find out!” After CIDI and CJO filed legal action against Baudet for this and other similar tweets, the Amsterdam Court in December 2021 ordered Baudet to delete his tweets comparing government COVID-19 measures with the Holocaust. Baudet complied with the order but characterized it as an “insane, incomprehensible verdict.”

During the year, Party for Freedom leader Geert Wilders called for the “de-Islamization of the Netherlands,” advocating a series of measures including closing all mosques and Islamic schools, banning the Quran, and barring all asylum seekers and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries. He used social media to disseminate his message. On April 24, Wilders told local media that Twitter had suspended his account for a tweet allegedly violating its rules against hateful conduct. The tweet in question called out Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for fatwas and death threats against Wilders, which Sharif asserted were due to Wilders’s description of the Prophet Muhammad as “fake,” and Islam as an “intolerant ideology.” The tweet followed April 23 reports about a petition in the Islamabad High Court ordering the Pakistani government to demand action by the Dutch government against Wilders. Wilders told press outlets that Twitter would lift the suspension if he withdrew the tweet but he had decided to appeal the decision instead.

The FvD stated that freedom of expression should prevail over freedom of religion. According to its election platform, the party opposed foreign funding of religious schools and institutions as well as the wearing of niqabs and other full face-coverings in public. In May, a survey by Leiden University indicated FvD members regularly retweeted antisemitic messages, thereby broadening their impact.

In August, FvD leader Thierry Baudet tweeted an endorsement of a conspiracy theory concerning Rothschild banks. CIDI stated the conspiracy theory about Rothschild was “a reproduction of the antisemitic cliché that Jews are secretly pulling the strings to wreak havoc in the world with evil intent.”

### **Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom**

There were reports of violence, threats, discrimination, verbal abuse, and vandalism against Jews and Muslims. Agencies collecting data on such incidents stated many occurrences went unreported or reported to NGOs but not to police. The data collected by agencies often differed because of varied reporting, collection, and analysis methods. Because religion and ethnicity are often closely linked, it was difficult to categorize many incidents as being solely based on religious identity.

On October 22, the anti-Islam group Pegida tried to burn a Quran during a demonstration in Rotterdam. Police arrested the group's leader, Edwin Wagenveld, for "insulting the faith" and confiscated the Quran, preventing further escalation. During the arrest, witnesses heard Wagenveld shouting insulting slogans about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.

Women who wear face coverings stated in a government survey that they experienced more discrimination since the introduction of the law banning burqas and increasingly avoided public places. In the survey, one respondent stated that a bus driver intentionally closed the door when she entered, causing her burqa to be trapped in the door. In another case, parents voted to exclude a burqa-wearing woman from a coffee morning at school. Several women also said that as a precaution, they stayed away from locations where the ban was in effect.

Municipal antidiscrimination boards recorded 75 incidents of antisemitic discrimination in 2021 (the latest data available), compared with 82 incidents in 2020. Most concerned aggression against Jews, including slurs or disputes between neighbors, soccer-related incidents, or vandalism.

According to the latest data available, police recorded 627 antisemitic incidents in 2021, which was 110 more than in 2020, an increase of 21 percent. The absolute number of registered complaints was still lower than in 2019, when 768 antisemitic incidents were on the report sheet. In almost three quarters of these cases, the incidents reported involved antisemitic slurs. The number of violent incidents that also involved the use of slurs increased from 26 in 2020 to 40 in 2021.

The National Expertise Center for Discrimination, a section of the Public Prosecutor's Office dealing exclusively with cases of discrimination, reported that it processed 157 new cases of discrimination in 2021 (the same number as in 2020). Thirty-one percent of the new cases in 2021 were related to antisemitism, compared with 19 percent in 2020, while 10 percent involved anti-Muslim sentiment.

A survey by Utrecht University, Oxford University, and the German Center for Integration and Migration Research suggested employment discrimination in the country against women wearing religious head coverings. According to the

survey, 35 percent of women wearing headscarves in photos on their curriculum vitae received responses from employers, as compared to 70 percent of women not wearing headscarves.

In April, CIDI reported 183 antisemitic incidents in 2021, an increase of 36 percent, compared with 2020, when 135 incidents went on record. In 2019, 182 incidents went on record. CIDI stated the increase may be related to less strict COVID-19 rules and more social interaction on the street. For example, the number of reports of antisemitic name-calling on the street increased from 16 in 2020 to 32 in 2021.

CIDI also reported rising tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict likely served as “justification” for attacking or intimidating Jews in the country. The number of reports of antisemitic incidents in schools rose from three in 2020 to 13 in 2021. One incident involved a primary school student whom an antagonist called a “cancer Jew” and shouted, “Free Palestine.” Protesters often cited the experiences of Jewish victims of the Holocaust against the government's COVID-19 policies.

Another CIDI study concluded that persons recognized as Jews often encountered name-calling or intimidation in public. Other common antisemitic acts included vandalism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, and hate emails. In addition to incidents of name-calling in the street and bullying at school, digital hate messages and threats increased. The study found the number of incidents in these three categories had at least doubled compared to 2020.

On May 24, Utrecht University published a study of more than 200,000 Dutch-language antisemitic messages online from the year 2020. The research, carried out on behalf of the Dutch Jewish Board and CIDI with a subsidy from the Ministry of Justice and Security, was the first to study antisemitic texts online. CIDI Director Hanna Luden called for increased research and methodology development, including the development of technology to analyze images, to effectively combat online antisemitism.

In 2021 (the most recent data available), MiND Nederland, the government-sponsored, editorially independent Registration Center for Discrimination on the Internet, reported it received 18 complaints about Dutch-language antisemitic

expressions on the internet, which constituted 5 percent of all reported discriminatory expressions it received that year and fewer than in the previous year (40 complaints, 5 percent).

Authorities reported most antisemitic incidents occurred in the immediate living environment of the persons targeted, often involving insults from neighbors or antisemitic graffiti or written threats on walls, mailboxes, or personal property. Police reported 22 incidents of vandalism involving swastikas or antisemitic texts sprayed on property and Jewish monuments in 2021, compared with 17 such incidents in 2020. Police also reported one antisemitic incident in 2021 involving a form of physical violence, such as pushing or shoving, as well as 40 cases of antisemitic incidents involving violence and verbal threats or slurs, and 63 cases of threats. In several cases, violence occurred against public officials as they carried out their official duties. Four of the threats and two of the violent incidents took place in May during demonstrations about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The NIHR reported receiving 94 complaints of religious discrimination in 2021 (the most recent data available), compared with 90 in 2020. These were mostly in the workplace, and the NIHR issued opinions in 39 cases. In one case, the NIHR judged that a fitness center discriminated on the grounds of religion by not allowing a patron to wear her headscarf in the facility. In another, the NIHR ruled that the bank Bunq B.V. discriminated on the basis of religion by not allowing religious organizations to open business accounts.

In 2021, municipal antidiscrimination boards around the country registered 253 other (not antisemitic) religious discrimination incidents, of which the majority (165) targeted Muslims, compared with 391 such incidents in 2020. These included physical and verbal harassment and vandalism. Multiple incidents concerned physical and verbal harassment of women on the street because they were wearing a headscarf, as well as incidents involving anti-Muslim stickers and posters.

Police registered 122 incidents of anti-Muslim discrimination. There were also several cases of mosques receiving threatening messages or where vandalism occurred. These incidents often took place around Christian holidays for example,

Christmas cards with threatening or abusive texts or used baby diapers as “Easter gifts.”

MiND Nederland registered 318 inflammatory statements made against Muslims on the internet in 2021, compared with 39 in 2020.

Although government authorities, the Dutch National Football Team, soccer teams, and the Anne Frank Foundation had multiple agreements in place to discourage antisemitic behavior at soccer matches, participants reportedly did not always carry out the terms of the agreements. For example, one agreement stipulated that if antisemitic chanting occurred during a match, teams would ask fans to stop immediately and if they did not, they would suspend the match. In practice, however, matches rarely paused.

CIDI reported it continued to work with educators who conducted online classroom programs to counter prejudice against Jews and other minorities, working with a network of teachers to improve education on the Holocaust with Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust remembrance center. CIDI also organized online symposia and lectures.

NGOs such as the OJCM and Belief in Living Together continued to promote interfaith dialogue among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. For example, the Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam continued its youth outreach project, “Get to Know Your Neighbors,” which explained Jewish practices to students. The Yalla! Foundation promoted mutual solidarity to counter anti-Muslim sentiment and antisemitism through meetings, guest lectures, and social gatherings.

#### **Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement**

In meetings with the Ministries of Justice and Security; Social Affairs and Employment; and Education, Culture, and Science, as well as with local governments and parliamentarians, officials from the U.S. embassy in The Hague and the consulate general in Amsterdam emphasized the importance of religious freedom and tolerance and discussed Holocaust restitution, kosher and halal slaughter, and measures to safeguard religious freedom and religious sites.

The embassy and consulate general highlighted the need for religious tolerance and interfaith understanding and discussed issues of religious integration and countering violent extremism in outreach to youth, academics, and religious leaders from various backgrounds, including Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. They also engaged community organizations such as the CJO, CIDI, Dutch Muslim Council, Organization of Jewish Communities in the Netherlands, Jewish Cultural Quarter, and Platform Islamic Organizations Rijnmond, the umbrella organization of Rotterdam mosques. During the final months of the year, the embassy and consulate general prioritized engagement and programming for the newly arrived Ambassador that focused on religious tolerance, Holocaust remembrance, and countering antisemitism.

On January 31, the U.S. Special Envoy on Holocaust Issues provided prerecorded remarks on Holocaust denial and distortion for a virtual International Holocaust Remembrance Day event in The Hague hosted by local organizations and the Israeli embassy.

On April 4 during Ramadan, the Chargé d’Affaires hosted an iftar in Rotterdam with mission contacts of various religious and ethnic backgrounds, including Rotterdam Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb. The dinner focused on ways in which faith communities can address anti-Muslim sentiment, advance interfaith dialogue, and promote religious tolerance.

In October, the Ambassador visited the Anne Frank House and met with its executive director. Following the visit, the Ambassador posted a social media message emphasizing the importance of Holocaust remembrance.

In November, the Ambassador attended the Kristallnacht Commemoration in Amsterdam and visited the Dutch Holocaust Memorial of Names, posting a social media message about the importance of confronting antisemitism.

On December 16, the Ambassador visited the construction site of the new National Holocaust Museum with the director of the Jewish Cultural Quarter, posting a social media message about the visit.