

Summary of the Fifth Report on Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Right-Wing Extremist Violence in the Netherlands

Incidents, reports, offenders and settlements in 2015

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1. Incident Overview

In the current summary, we will present an overview of all incidents involving racism and anti-Semitism retrieved from police databases. For every topic (anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic verbal abuse, racism, and racist verbal abuse) we will quote the number of incidents in 2015 and compare these numbers to previous years. In addition, we will focus on the regional distribution of the incidents and on the types of offences involving anti-Semitism and racism. Finally, we will quantify the number of alleged offenders, the number of police reports, the number of settlements by the public prosecutor's office, and the background characteristics of the alleged offenders.

1.1 Incidents by Category

In all, the search queries yielded a total number of 4,165 incidents with anti-Semitic or racist characteristics that occurred in the year 2015. Table 1 shows how these incidents were distributed over the categories. Some incidents were retrieved by multiple queries and therefore figure more than once in the table. The table also shows the trends in the numbers of incidents throughout the years. An adaptation of the search method for racist incidents resulted in a deviation from the trend compared to previous years (see text under Table 1 below). For this reason, the trend in the number of racist incidents in 2015 must be interpreted with special care.

In addition, due to technical problems, no substantive information could be retrieved for part of the incidents from the last quarter of 2015. It is estimated that several hundreds of incidents from the last quarter have gone under the radar as a result. We expect that this will primarily affect the number of racist incidents logged. First, because far more racist than anti-Semitic incidents were retrieved from police databases, which means that the technical problems will have had greater impact on these numbers. Secondly, because the discussion and acrimony about the arrival and reception of refugees in the Netherlands increased in the last quarter of 2015, which may have led to an increase in the number of racist incidents (see also Van Bon & Mink, 2016).

Table 1 Incidents by category 2012-2015.

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Intentional anti-Semitism	58	61	76	57
Anti-Semitic verbal abuse	931	872	710	424
Racism	(2,077) ²	(2,189) ²	(2,764) ²	2,732 ²
• of which discrimination against Muslims		35	142	466
Racist verbal abuse	1,352	1,346	825	842
• of which verbal abuse against Muslims		115	88	222
Total ¹	4,274	4,283	4,092	4,165

¹ Since incidents may be listed under more than one category, the total number of incidents is lower than the sum of the incidents by category.

² Due to a change in our data collection method concerning racist incidents in 2015, we have to be careful when interpreting the trend.

The number of incidents of intentional anti-Semitism decreased slightly in 2015 compared to 2014 and is back at the levels of 2012 and 2013. The higher number from 2014 may be explained by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that flared up that year (Tierolf et al., 2015).

Compared to previous years, the racist incidents were selected more carefully in 2015. Using the queries for racism, the police manually screened the incidents that were retrieved, instead of the incidents being screened automatically as in previous years. This was not an option before, for practical reasons. Since the police screened the incidents manually, all incidents involving public servants being called racists could be removed from the data file. In previous reports (Tierolf et al., 2013; Tierolf et al., 2014) the set of racist incidents that were retrieved using these queries consisted of this type of incidents for roughly 20%. This would imply that in 2015, the officers screening the data file removed around 20% of the total number of racist incidents. For this reason, we expect that the number of racist incidents from 2015 that we report on would have been higher without the manual screening, while the present approach does more justice to the actual situation. In this light, we estimate that the number of incidents retrieved would increase to 3,200 to 3,300 if we would have used the same search method as the one used in 2014. Or, vice versa, that our improved search method would have yielded 2,100 to 2,200 incidents for 2014. In any case, an increase in the number of racist incidents was only to be expected in view of the heated discussions surrounding the arrival and reception of refugees.

In 2015, the number of incidents of discrimination against and verbal abuse of Muslims increased considerably. This is in line with our expectations in view of the social developments in the Netherlands and the rest of Western Europe. One likely explanation for the increase in the discrimination against Muslims may be found in the heightened social tensions caused by the terrorist attacks that were committed all over Europe in 2015. Another possible explanation is the arrival of large groups of refugees from predominantly Islamic countries.

1.2 Incidents by Type

The police register all incidents with a tag that describes the criminal offence as specifically as possible. These incident tags are linked to a variety of sections from various Dutch codes of law, such as the Criminal Code, the Civil Code, or the Road Traffic Act. In labelling the incidents, we use these tags. In this section, we will discuss in which types of incidents (that is to say in which offences) anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic verbal abuse, racism, and racist verbal abuse played a role from 2013 to 2015. Table 2 provides an overview.

Usually, every incident logged by the police gets only one tag, even though one incident may involve several criminal offences committed by several individuals. As such, the choice of the tag is at the discretion of the police officer involved. As a result, incident tags can only be general indicators of the criminal offences committed in the course of an incident and do not paint a full picture of the incident and the criminal offences committed.

For this reason, the categories presented in this report have to be viewed separately from the incident tags used by the police. If a native Dutch person, for instance, insults a Surinamese-Dutch person by calling him a “black motherfucker”, adding “if you touch me, I will kill you”, the police is most likely to tag the incident as a threat (or an insult) because of the last part of the sentence. As the threat is racist in nature, it will still turn up in our query. The same goes for anti-Semitic graffiti on a garden fence. Applying graffiti is an offence, and we can

only retrieve this incident through a special query, not by searching incidents tagged 'discrimination'.

Even so, police officers may decide to log a threat, an insult or graffiti as discrimination, in one of two ways. They may either tag the incident with F50 discrimination (Sections 137c-137g and 429quater, Dutch Criminal Code), or alternatively treat it as an offence under general criminal law ('insult', 'threat', 'assault') and add information on the discriminatory nature of the incident, or add F50 as a secondary tag.

For a clear understanding of the information presented in Tables 2 and 3, we will start by explaining the various types of incidents listed in the tables.

- *Threat* and *insult* refer to incidents that are tagged as such by the police.
- Incidents tagged as *theft* cover several types of incidents, such as robberies or burglaries. If incidents are logged as robbery or theft with violence, they are registered as violent incidents.
- *Discrimination* concerns incidents tagged *F50 Discrimination*. This tag was used relatively sparingly in 2014, although its use did increase in the course of 2014. In 2015, we observed a slight decrease in the number of incidents with this tag, compared to 2014.
- Incidents tagged as *violence* may involve common assault or aggravated assault, or other incidents involving violence, such as violent robberies.
- *Events* and *warning signs* include incidents that are tagged as rallies, general entries or warning signs. These two tags are used by the police to log matters that are of interest, but in which an offence has not been committed yet.
- *Nuisance* usually concerns nuisance caused by teenagers, by a confused person, or nuisance from noise.
- *Quarrel* covers incidents logged as disputes between neighbours, domestic disputes, and quarrels.
- *Vandalism* concerns incidents varying from graffiti to vandalism. 2015 saw a marked increase in the number of incidents tagged *vandalism*. The cause is yet unclear; it was not related to the changes in the search method described above.
- *Possession of weapons* is relevant to the present report since weapons may be decorated with right-wing extremist or anti-Semitic symbols, as in the case of German weapons from the Second World War with swastikas on them.
- *Other offences* include all incidents that do not fall into any of the other categories, such as traffic violations, possession of banned substances, or public intoxication.

Table 2 Type of offence (incident tags) 2013-2015.

Type of offence	2013		2014		2015	
	Number of incidents	%	Number of incidents	%	Number of incidents	%
Threat	630	14.7	517	12.6	459	11.0
Insult	596	13.9	465	11.4	375	9.0
Theft	188	4.4	165	4.0	93	2.2
Discrimination	213	5.0	533	13.0	478	11.5
Violence	922	21.5	780	19.1	650	15.6
Events and warning signs	66	1.5	105	2.6	59	1.4

Nuisance	232	5.4	265	6.5	252	6.1
Quarrels	409	9.5	363	8.9	388	9.3
Vandalism (including graffiti)	215	5.0	201	4.9	610	14.6
Possession of weapons	22	0.5	13	0.3	15	0.4
Other offences	790	18.4	685	16.7	785	18.8
Total	4283	100	4092	100	4165	100

1.2.1 Types of Incidents by Category

The types of incidents involving anti-Semitism, racism (including discrimination against Muslims), and racist verbal abuse (including verbal abuse of Muslims) differ (see Table 3). Broadly speaking, the distribution of incidents over the various incident tags has remained largely the same, compared to 2014. Most of the (minor) shifts can be found in the incidents of discrimination against Muslims or verbal abuse of Muslims.

Our main findings from Table 3 are as follows:

- When it comes to intentional anti-Semitism, *discrimination* is the most common tag: it is used in 30% of the incidents. The tag use showed a marked decline in racism and discrimination against Muslims compared to 2014, as it was used in only 14% and 20% of the respective incidents. It was still the most common incident tag used with discrimination against Muslims. Incidents involving racism were most commonly tagged as *violence* (in 21% of the incidents) or *other offences* (in 17% of the incidents). This divergence between the tags used for anti-Semitism and racism was noticeable in the 2014 report as well: racism is often expressed within the context of, or in response to, another incident, while the Jewish background of the target is often the direct cause of the incident when it comes to anti-Semitic incidents (Tierolf et al., 2015).
- For anti-Semitic verbal abuse incidents, the most common category is *other offences*, followed by *insult* in 19% of the cases. This makes sense, as most of the anti-Semitic verbal abuse incidents take place in the context of another incident: a police officer is anti-Semitically verbally abused by the alleged offender during or after the arrest. In racist verbal abuse incidents or in incidents involving verbal abuse of Muslims, the most commonly used tag is *violence*, in 32% and 29% of the incidents respectively. In those cases, the verbal abuse is combined with violence or in response to a racist insult.
- The percentage of anti-Semitic and racist incidents that was tagged *F50 discrimination* in the police logs, increased markedly between 2013 and 2014. For 2015, we have observed a small decrease in the number of incidents tagged *F50*, especially when it concerns racism and discrimination against Muslims (see Table 3).

Table 3 Type of offence (incident tags) by category for the years 2013 - 2015.

	Intentional anti-Semitism			Racism			Discrimination against Muslims		
	% 2013 N=61	% 2014 N=76	%2015 N=57	% 2013 N=2,189	% 2014 N=2,764	%2015 N=2,732	% 2013 N=35	% 2014 N=142	%2015 N=466
Threat	13%	11%	16%	14%	11%	13%	6%	10%	16%

Insult	5%	11%	4%	11%	10%	9%	17%	11%	8%
Theft	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	2%	0%	1%	2%
Discrimination	25%	26%	30%	8%	17%	14%	40%	32%	20%
Violence	5%	14%	7%	16%	16%	21%	0%	17%	14%
Events and warning signs	3%	3%	5%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Nuisance	0%	3%	2%	6%	8%	5%	3%	6%	4%
Quarrel	13%	7%	4%	11%	10%	12%	3%	10%	11%
Vandalism (including graffiti)	15%	9%	12%	6%	6%	5%	20%	4%	7%
Possession of weapons	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other offences	21%	17%	21%	21%	16%	17%	11%	10%	19%
	Anti-Semitic verbal abuse			Racist verbal abuse			Verbal abuse of Muslims		
	% 2013 N=872	% 2014 N=710	%2015 N=424	% 2013 N=1346	% 2014 N=825	%2015 N=842	% 2013 N=115	% 2014 N=88	%2015 N=222
Threat	12%	15%	14%	17%	17%	16%	14%	25%	19%
Insult	32%	15%	19%	8%	14%	12%	22%	10%	7%
Theft	4%	7%	3%	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%	5%
Discrimination	2%	1%	6%	2%	4%	9%	8%	5%	9%
Violence	13%	18%	12%	39%	35%	32%	21%	30%	29%
Events and warning signs	2%	6%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Nuisance	7%	6%	6%	3%	3%	2%	3%	7%	3%
Quarrel	3%	3%	4%	10%	8%	9%	17%	3%	10%
Vandalism (including graffiti)	4%	3%	8%	4%	3%	4%	4%	1%	5%
Possession of weapons	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Other offences	21%	26%	24%	12%	11%	12%	12%	15%	13%

1.3 Regional Distribution of Incidents

Table 4 shows how the number of anti-Semitic and racist incidents increased in the police regions of Noord-Nederland and Oost-Nederland, compared to 2014. It is yet unclear how this increase can be explained. At the same time, the number of anti-Semitic and racist incidents in the police regions of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague decreased, again without any clear explanation. The decrease in Rotterdam and The Hague may be linked to the decrease in the number of anti-Semitic verbal abuse incidents. This type of incidents mainly concentrated in these regions over the past few years (Tierolf et al., 2015). Furthermore, the decline could be the result of the more accurate screening for racist incidents, as a result of which incidents in which police officers making an arrest were called racists were excluded from the count. It is possible that this type of incidents was over-represented in the regions

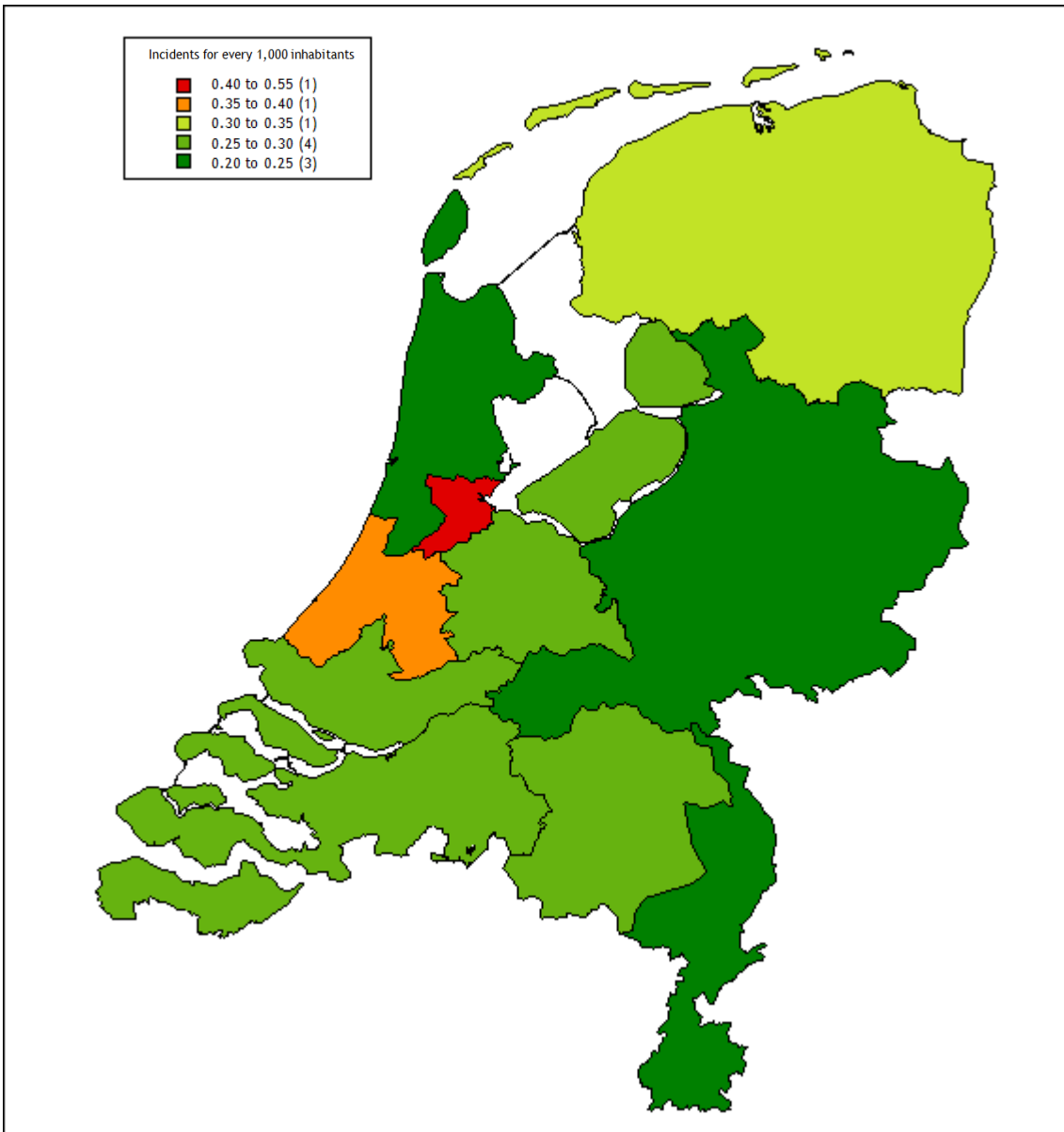
of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, because the percentage of people from a migrant background is much higher in these regions than in other regions.¹

The rise in the number of anti-Semitic and racist incidents in the police regions of Noord-Nederland and Oost-Nederland and the decline in the number of incidents in the regions of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague is also reflected in the number of incidents for every 1,000 inhabitants (see Map 1). In eight out of ten police regions, the number of incidents is now below 0.3 for every 1,000 inhabitants. The police regions of Amsterdam and The Hague are the only regions with significantly higher rates, at 0.53 and 0.37 incidents for every 1,000 inhabitants respectively (see Table 4).

Table 4 Number of anti-Semitic and racist incidents by regional police unit 2014-2015.

<i>Regional police unit</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>Incidents for every 1,000 inh. 2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Incidents for every 1,000 inh. 2015</i>
Noord-Nederland	297	0.19	435	0.30
Oost-Nederland	542	0.19	631	0.24
Midden-Nederland	476	0.28	468	0.29
Noord-Holland	250	0.19	291	0.23
Amsterdam	555	0.63	462	0.53
The Hague	679	0.42	590	0.37
Rotterdam	533	0.34	430	0.29
Zeeland-West-Brabant	320	0.24	349	0.28
Oost-Brabant	241	0.19	300	0.26
Limburg	175	0.18	205	0.23
No known crime location in the Netherlands	24		4	
Total	4,092		4,165	0.29

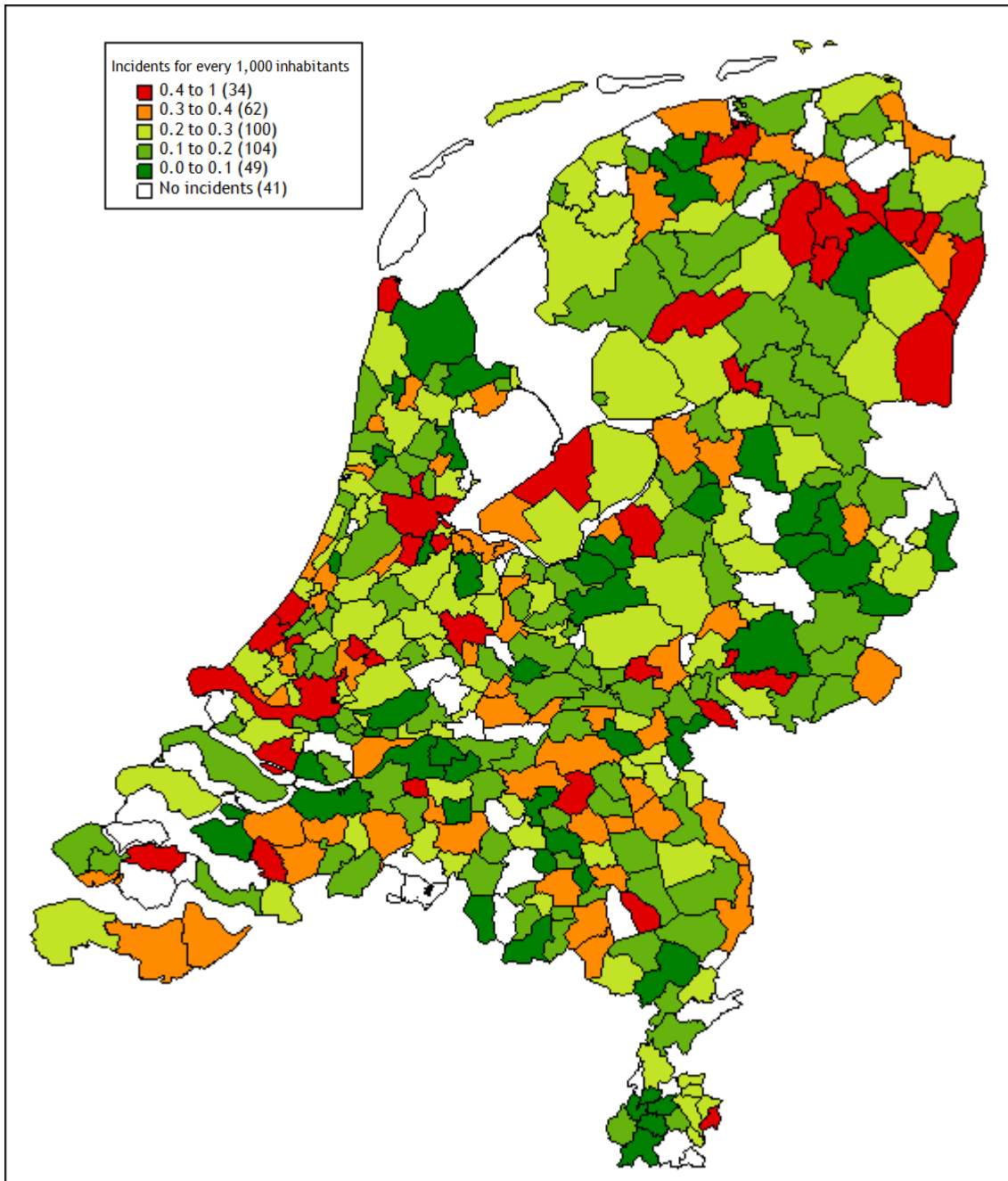
¹ Source: Statistics Netherlands, The Hague/Heerlen. Consulted on 10 November 2016. Via StatLine.



Map 1 Anti-Semitic and racist incidents for every 1,000 inhabitants by regional unit in 2015.

1.3.1 Distribution by Municipality

Map 2 shows which municipalities have the largest number of anti-Semitic and racist incidents for every 1,000 inhabitants. The information in the map supports the perception that most of the incidents occur in the police units Noord-Nederland, Oost-Nederland, The Hague, and Amsterdam.



Map 1 Anti-Semitic and racist incidents for every 1,000 inhabitants by municipality in 2015.

1.4 Judicial Chain

Cases handled by the police follow a prescribed procedure, as shown in the flow chart below (Figure 1). Once a case has been registered by the police, an official police report may or may not be drawn up. Every incident for which a police report has been drawn up is handled by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) or dismissed by the police. The PPS may handle a case in one of four ways: by sending a writ of summons, with a fine/penalty order, a transfer, or

the decision not to prosecute. If the PPS decides to send a writ of summons, the case is taken to court. If the fine imposed is not paid, the PPS may still send out a writ of summons. When cases are transferred or joined, the decision not to prosecute, the fine, the punishment or the writ of summons may still follow in appeal.

Figure 1 Flow chart of the criminal justice system

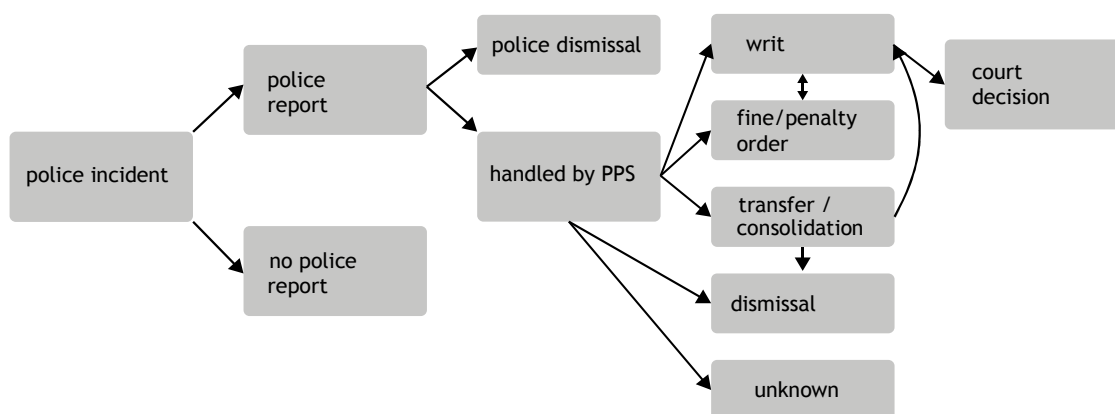


Table 6 shows the number of incidents with anti-Semitic or racist characteristics retrieved from the police databases for 2015 in which an official police report was drawn up, the number of incidents subsequently handled by the PPS, the number of cases in which a writ of summons was sent out, and finally the number of incidents in which the court passed judgment. This does not, however, mean that the judicial process focuses on the anti-Semitic or racist aspects of these incidents. When a fight ensues because of a racist remark, for instance, the judicial procedure may focus on the violence, and when a police officer is called a ‘Jew’ or a ‘Nigger’ when making an arrest for theft, the judicial process will focus on the theft. Just like in our previous reports, we have not received information indicating whether incidents were handled as offences under general criminal law with discriminatory characteristics or as offences without such aspects (Tierolf et al., 2015: p. 55). Only when it comes to incidents handled by the Public Prosecution Service under the section on discrimination do we know for certain that the judicial process saw to the racist or anti-Semitic aspect of the incident.

Table 6 Numbers and percentages of anti-Semitic and racist incidents followed by a police report, being handled by the PPS, followed by a writ of summons or a judgment in 2014 and 2015.

Stage	2014			2015		
	Number of incidents	% of the total number of incidents	% of the number of incidents in the previous stage	Number of incidents	% of the total number of incidents	% of the number of incidents in the previous stage
Total number of incidents	4,092	100%		4,165	100%	
Police report drawn up	(2,676) ¹	(65.5%) ¹	65.5% of all incidents	3,980	95.6%	95.6% off all incidents

Handled by the PPS	870	21.3%	32.5% of all incidents for which a police report was drawn up	847	20.3%	21.3% of all incidents for which a police report was drawn up
Writ of summons	545	13.3%	62.6% of all incidents handled by the PPS	590	14.2%	69.6% of all incidents handled by the PPS
Court judgment	388	9.5%	71.2% of all incidents taken to court	437	10.5%	74.1% of all incidents taken to court

¹ Due to the improved integration of police databases and PPS files, a comparison between 2015 and 2014 is not possible.

In close to 96% out of 4,165 incidents (i.e. 3,980 incidents) with anti-Semitic or racist traits retrieved from the 2015 police databases, a formal police report was drawn up. This is a marked increase compared to 2014, when we found that police reports had been drawn up for circa two-thirds of all incidents with anti-Semitic or racist traits. However, we suspect that the actual number of incidents from 2014 for which a formal police report was drawn up was higher than the number quoted in our report. The main reason for this divergence is technical: only in 2015 did the police and the PPS started registering incidents in the same format, allowing us to connect the data from the police databases and the PPS files much better than before. We assume that there must have been multiple incidents in 2014 in which the format of the police report number did not correspond with the PPS number, resulting in failed matches for these incidents.

Over 21% (or 847 incidents) of the 3,980 incidents for which a police report was drawn up were handled by the PPS.² Out of these 847 incidents, in nearly 70% of the cases (590 incidents) a writ of summons was issued. Finally, around three quarters (or 437 incidents) of these 545 incidents resulted in a court judgment. As a result, 20.3% of all incidents with anti-Semitic or racist traits retrieved from the National Law Enforcement Database (BVH) were handled by the PPS, in 14.2% of the incidents a writ of summons was issued, and in 10.5% of the incidents, the court passed judgment (see Table 6). The numbers of incidents that were handled by the PPS, in which a writ of summons was issued and in which judgment was given, match the numbers and percentages of 2014.

At the time of writing, some of the incidents had still not been resolved. In 3.5% of the cases handled by the PPS, for instance, there was no settlement yet, and in 16.8% of the court cases, judgment had not been given.

² The actual number of cases handled by the PPS was higher than the number we could retrieve. This was caused by the fact that connecting the databases of the police and the files of the PPS is a complex matter. This is to say that in reality, *over* 21.3% of the incidents for which a police report was drawn up, were handled by the PPS. According to an estimate of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Security and Justice (WODC), this number could easily be ten to twenty per cent higher.

2. A Closer Look into the Categories

2.1 *Anti-Semitism*

Unlike previous years, in which we had to report on increases, the number of incidents of intentional anti-Semitism decreased in 2015, down from 76 incidents in 2014 to 57 incidents in 2015. This brings the number of incidents back to the levels of 2013. The fact that the number was higher in 2014 was probably the result of the escalating conflict between the Israeli army and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the summer of 2014. 2015 did not see any such intensification of violence in the region. In line with these findings, we have observed that the incidents of intentional anti-Semitism were spread out fairly evenly over the year. Most of the anti-Semitic incidents took place in the Amsterdam region, probably because the number of Jews in this region is relatively high compared to the rest of the Netherlands. Anti-Semitic verbal abuse that is not directed against a Jewish person or location seems to be declining. The explanation of this phenomenon is unclear, but the tendency can be observed over a longer period of time.

The incidents of intentional anti-Semitism can be divided into three sub-categories. The first sub-category involves violence against individuals, involving insults, threats, provocations, or assault of (perceived) Jews. This is the largest category: 37 out of 57 incidents of intentional anti-Semitism can be categorised as violence against individuals. In little over half of these incidents, anti-Semitic intentions seem to have fuelled the incident. In the other incidents, the anti-Semitism was often part of the escalation within the framework of another incident. Some incidents had political motives. The second sub-category consists of anti-Semitic graffiti and scratching or vandalism at (perceived) Jewish locations, such as a Jewish cemetery or memorial sites for the Second World War. We retrieved ten incidents like this from the police databases. The third sub-category is made up of provocations. Examples from 2015 include shouting insults or giving the Nazi salute in front of a Jewish building, or chanting during memorial services for the Second World War. Another ten incidents like this were retrieved from the police databases.

2.2 *Racism*

For 2015, we retrieved a total of 2,732 racially inspired incidents from the National Law Enforcement Database (BVH). This may seem like a stabilisation compared to the total number of incidents in 2014, but an improvement in the data collection of racist incidents has made such a comparison unreliable.³ For this reason, we will assume that the number of racist incidents did not remain the same in 2015, but rather increased compared to 2014. To provide some context to the racist incidents that took place in 2015, we read and analysed a sample of 160 incidents with racist characteristics. We divided these incidents into four sub-

³ The improvement in the data collection method resulted in the removal of incidents in which public servants in the performance of their duty were called a “racists” from the incident file. This was not feasible in previous years. An estimated 20% of incidents were removed from the file for 2015. (See chapter 1 for more information on the changes in the collection of data on racist incidents.)

categories of racist incidents. The largest sub-category involves racist violence, such as threats, assaults or targeted graffiti: 44% of the incidents in our sample fall into this group. The group of incidents in which the racist element followed from the escalation of another incident was roughly the same size as the group in which the racist intentions seem to have been the direct cause of the incident. In a smaller number of incidents, the violence followed a racist insult. One third of the racist incidents concerned racist verbal abuse. In contrast with previous years, the number of incidents of racist verbal abuse did not decrease in 2015 but stayed all but the same as in 2014. A small number of incidents concerned unequal treatment or perceived unequal treatment. Finally, we retrieved a number of incidents of untargeted racist graffiti. Nine racist incidents concerned discrimination against Roma and Sinti, 466 incidents concerned discrimination against Muslims. We further discuss discrimination against Muslims in paragraph 2.3.

It is noteworthy that the racist incidents retrieved from the BVH did not reflect the arrival of large numbers of refugees in the Netherlands, even though this connection could be observed very clearly in online racism and in the development of right-wing extremism (see paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5), and also, to a lesser extent, in the incidents of discrimination against Muslims (see paragraph 2.3). One possible explanation could be that the topic was mainly debated in the final quarter of 2015. Due to a technical problem at the National Police Force, information about part of the incidents from the fourth quarter is missing. Another explanation could be that the tension surrounding the arrival of large numbers of refugees was not reflected in the type of incidents known to the police, for instance because refugees are less likely to go to the police than other victims of racism in the Netherlands. We are unable to conclude which explanation is the more valid one on the basis of this report alone.

2.3 Discrimination Against Muslims

Even though not every type of discrimination against Muslims is racist, it is often coupled with racist motives or manifestations. Within the category of racist incidents, we found 466 incidents of discrimination against Muslims. This means that discrimination against Muslims has increased for the second year in a row: for 2014, we found 142 incidents of discrimination against Muslims, and only 35 incidents for 2013. There seems to be a shift in the grounds on which the same group is discriminated against. Where before, people with a North-African appearance were verbally abused on account of their ethnic background (as in “*fucking Moroccan*”), this now happens because of their religion (“*fucking Muslim*”). The number of incidents of discrimination against Muslims was slightly higher in the months of January and November than in the other months of the year. The terrorist attacks committed in Paris in these months may explain this increase. The increase in discrimination against Muslims retrieved from the BVH is in accordance with records from other sources. The municipal Anti-Discrimination Agencies (ADVs) observed an increase of 45% compared to 2014 in the number of complaints about discrimination against Muslims (Dinsbach et al., 2016). In addition, two new reporting centres for discrimination against Muslims logged a total of 322 complaints of discrimination against Muslims (Abaâziz, 2016; Lachhab & Vorthoren, 2016). These other sources show the same link with the terrorist attacks, both regarding the time frame and the contents.

2.4 Racism and Anti-Semitism on the Internet

In order to study the anti-Semitic and racist incidents that took place on the Internet, we were granted access to the logs of the Dutch Complaints Bureau for Discrimination on the Internet (Meldpunt Internet Discriminatie (MInD)). Upon studying a sample from these logs, two observations stood out. First of all, most anti-Semitic and racist statements on the Internet target Jews, refugees, or Muslims as a group. By contrast, the anti-Semitism or racism encountered in the streets is often directed against a specific person or persons. Secondly, most anti-Semitic and racist statements on the Internet are made in response to another notification, often in the comment section of a news item on a news site, or when a link to a news item is posted on a forum or Facebook page. In the case of anti-Semitism, these news items often refer to actions of the Israeli army, and in the case of racism, they often refer to refugees.

2.5 Right-Wing Extremist Violence

With respect to right-wing extremist violence, the year 2015 changed its pace towards the end. Before October 2015, there were few clear developments. There seemed to be a slight decrease in the level of right-wing extremist violence and in the number of right-wing extremist rallies. This decrease could be partially explained by the fact that some heated social debates (on Black Pete, on the 'fewer, fewer' statements of Geert Wilders) that were connected to the large number of incidents with a right-wing extremist background from 2014 were finally dying down. In addition, there may have been a connection between the decrease in the number of violent incidents in the first half of 2015 and the continued fragmentation of various neo-Nazi organisations over this period. Even so, a response to the terrorist attack on the editorial staff of Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015 might have been expected. However, this response did not manifest in the form of incidents of right-wing extremist violence.

In October 2015, however, the situation changed completely with the potential arrival of large groups of refugees in the Netherlands. Dutch society was in upheaval, complete with heated debates and increased polarisation. The protest against the arrival and reception of the refugees was part of the upheaval. In many cases, right-wing extremist groups interfered expressly in the protest. It resulted in increased right-wing extremist activism and in other new developments in the right-wing extremist milieu. Existing right-wing extremist groups organised their own activities and participated in neighbourhood protests against the reception of refugees in their area. In addition, new right-wing extremist groups surfaced in the turmoil, among which a Dutch branch of Pegida. These developments resulted in the strong growth of the active following of various right-wing extremist groups, from around 100 followers in 2014 to circa 245 followers in 2015 - an extraordinarily high number for the Netherlands. Such high numbers of right-wing extremist activists had not been seen in the Netherlands since the mid-1990s (cf.: Donselaar, 1997, p. 10).

The number of participations by right-wing extremists in rallies also increased sharply over this same period. Not only in rallies organised by right-wing extremist groups, but also in protests organised by others, particularly neighbourhood protests against the arrival of refugees. It is, however, noteworthy that the strong increase in the number of active followers of right-wing extremist groups did not result straightaway in an increase in right-

wing extremist violence in 2015. Most violent incidents took place in the last three months of 2015. Over the whole year, we observe a slight decrease in the number of incidents of right-wing extremist violence. This can be explained in part by the fact that even though right-wing extremist organisations were very vocal during the protests against the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands, in 2015 they mainly used non-violence and - in most cases - legal methods of protesting.

Another striking fact within the context of the 2015 right-wing extremist violence is that most of the incidents of violence were not racially motivated, but rather targeted political adversaries - mainly left-wing politicians and proponents of the reception of the refugees.

2.6 Judicial settlement

Compared to 2014, 2015 did not see any major changes in the judicial settlement of incidents with racist or anti-Semitic characteristics. Official police reports were drawn up for close to 96% of all of the 4,165 incidents with anti-Semitic or racist characteristics that were retrieved from the police databases for 2015. This is a marked increase compared to 2014. This increase can be explained by the standardised registration of the official police report numbers by the police and the PPS, which makes it easier to link the files from both organisations. 21% (847 incidents) out of 3,980 incidents with an official police report were handled by the PPS. In almost 70% (590 incidents) of these cases, a writ of summons was issued. Finally, in almost three quarters (437 incidents) of these cases, a court judgment was given.

It is noteworthy that the Section on discrimination from the Criminal Code is used in only a small fraction (55 out of 1,072) of the cases handled by the PPS. In 2014, it was used in 34 cases. This is caused in part by the fact that we still lack understanding on which cases are handled as general offences with discriminatory characteristics. The National Expertise Centre for Diversity (LECD) of the PPS announced in 2015 (see Tierolf et al., 2015) that it expected that as from 2015, the registration of general offences with discriminatory characteristics would provide more insight into the number of times discrimination was actually raised by the PPS as a punishable or sentence-increasing factor in the cases it handled. We hope that this will continue to happen in the future, to allow for a more complete picture of the full judicial approach to discrimination.

3. Conclusion

In this summary, we have outlined the occurrence of anti-Semitism, racism, and right-wing extremist violence in the Netherlands in 2015, paying additional attention to the discrimination against Muslims.

First of all, the terrorist attacks in Western Europe and the arrival and reception of large numbers of refugees in the Netherlands seem to have influenced the nature of the racist incidents in the Netherlands. This is reflected, among other things, in the marked increase in the number of incidents targeting Muslims, retrieved from the police databases and confirmed by other sources, such as the annual reports of the ADVs, the data from the MDI and MiND, and reporting centres for discrimination against Muslims. One likely explanation for the increase in the number of incidents of discrimination against Muslims in the Netherlands is the increased anti-Muslim sentiment as a result of the terrorist attacks and the arrival of large numbers of Islamic refugees in the Netherlands. This explanation is supported by the fact that the number of incidents of discrimination against Muslims was higher in January and November of 2015 - the months in which the terrorist attacks were committed in Paris - than in the rest of the year. A more substantive analysis of the incidents that occurred during these two months points to a connection with the terrorist attacks as well. During those months, Muslims were frequently called “*terrorist*” or called to account for the attacks (“*Look what your people did in Paris*”).

Secondly, as from October 2015, when the social upheaval about the arrival and reception of large numbers of refugees increased, right-wing extremist violence and the following of right-wing extremist groups increased. It is noteworthy in this respect that the incidents of right-wing extremist violence were far more often directed against political adversaries, especially against left-wing politicians and proponents of the reception of refugees, than in previous years. Between January 2015 and October 2015, right-wing extremist violence and the following of right-wing extremist groups seemed to dwindle in comparison to 2014. This decrease may be explained in part by the fact that some social debates (Black Pete, the “fewer, fewer” remarks of Geert Wilders in 2014) that were related to the large number of incidents with a right-wing extremist background from 2014 were dying down around that time.

A third finding is that we suspect that the number of racist incidents increased slightly in 2015. However, because of changes in our data collection methods, this increase is not reflected in this report. The change entails that all potentially racist incidents from 2015 were read by so-called screeners and that the large number of incidents in which public officials on duty were called “*racist*” were removed from the database. This option was not available in previous years when the incidents were logged as (perceived) unequal treatment. The suspected increase in the number of racist incidents may probably be explained by the increased social tensions due to the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands. However, the substantive analysis of the racist incidents from the BVH did not show a clear connection with the refugee debate. In racism on the Internet, the link with social tensions is very clear, though. One possible explanation is that the refugee debate is largely conducted on the Internet, and does not carry over to real life. Alternatively, refugees may not go to the police when they experience racism, for instance because of their limited knowledge of the Dutch language and regulations.

A fourth finding, in conclusion, is that, compared to 2014, anti-Semitism decreased slightly over 2015 and is back at the levels of 2012 and 2013. The slight peak in anti-Semitism from 2014 may be explained by an increase in the violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the summer of 2014. There was no similar increase in violence in this conflict in 2012, 2013 or 2015. The data from other sources (the ADVs and CIDI) confirm this.

And so, to summarise: all four developments mentioned above were influenced by social events from these categories in 2015. The fact that the war in the Middle East failed to materialise seems to have resulted in a decrease in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. The jihadist attacks in Paris and the arrival of large numbers of mainly Muslim refugees in the Netherlands seems to have caused a considerable increase in the number of incidents of discrimination against Muslims and a clear increase in the active following of right-wing extremist groups.