Judaism. Anti-Semitism flared up throughout Europe in 2014. Far-right political parties, including Greece’s neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, made gains in European Parliament elections in late May. During a war between Israel and Hamas in the summer, anti-Israel rallies raged in Berlin, Paris, and other European cities. Four people—an Israeli couple, a French woman, and a Belgian man—were shot to death at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, Belgium, on May 24. In Donetsk, Ukraine, in April, amidst conflict between Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces, masked men distributed leaflets instructing Jews to register or face consequences. The leaflets purported to be signed by a pro-Russian group, but their source was uncertain. The hebeading of American Jewish journalist Steven Sotloff by members of the Islamic State (ISIS) in a video released September 2 heightened uneasiness among Jews everywhere.

Demonstrations against anti-Semitism took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, in August, and in Berlin in September. At the Berlin demonstration, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke out strongly against anti-Semitism. However, the emigration of Jews from Europe rose noticeably in 2014; thousands moved to Israel.

Israel. In June, three Israeli teenagers—Gilad Shaar, Naftali Fraenkel, and Eyal Yifrach—were kidnapped and murdered in the West Bank. The incident, along with the revenge burning of a Palestinian teen in East Jerusalem and heavy rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel, helped trigger a war between Israel and Hamas lasting from July 8 to August 26. During the conflict, the Israel Defense Forces discovered tunnels, dug from Gaza to Israel, that could be used to launch attacks on Israel.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in 2014 took aim at the Israeli soft-drink company SodaStream International because it had a factory in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. BDS is a movement against Israel’s actions in disputed territories in the Middle East. American actress Scarlett Johansson drew criticism for her role as a brand ambassador for SodaStream. In January, she announced she would give up an ambassadorial role in the relief agency Oxfam, which supports BDS. In October, SodaStream announced it would move its West Bank factory to southern Israel, for “purely commercial” reasons.

The United States. On April 13, just before Passover, a man and his grandson were shot dead outside a Jewish community center in Overland Park, Kansas, and a woman was shot dead outside a Jewish retirement community a few blocks away. White supremacist Frazier Glenn Miller, also known as Frazier Glenn Cross, was charged with the murders.

Two prominent American rabbis were involved in scandals in 2014. In May, Rabbi Barry Starr of Sharon, Massachusetts, resigned unexpectedly. It was alleged that he used temple funds to pay "hush money" to an extortionist to cover up an extramarital affair with a 16-year-old male. In October, Rabbi Barry Freundel of Washington, D.C., was arrested and charged with secretly filming women who used the mikvah (ritual bath) affiliated with his synagogue.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, a Holocaust refugee who fathered the Jewish Renewal movement in the United States, died in Boulder, Colorado, on July 3. The renewal movement sought to introduce mysticism, meditation, and ecstatic prayer into Jewish life. American Jewish activist and writer Leonard Fein died in August 13 or 14. Fein cofounded the Jewish magazine Moment and founded Mazon, a Jewish anti-hunger group. American Jews moved in and out of high political posts in 2014. On February 3, economist Janet Yellen became the first woman to chair the Board of Governors of the U.S. Federal Reserve System. Banking executive Stanley Fischer became the board’s vice chairman on June 16. Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives Eric Cantor (Rep.-Virginia) lost a primary election on June 10 and resigned from Congress.

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Kenya. In 2014, Kenya was hit by a spate of attacks targeting public transportation, churches, police stations, and tourist destinations. Twin terrorist bombings in a market area of Nairobi, the capital, on May 16 left at least 13 people dead and more than 70 others injured. The blasts followed earlier attacks in May in the vicinity of the port city of Mombasa, in which several people died and many were injured. Back-to-back attacks over June 15 and 16 left more than 50 people dead. Masked gunmen swept through the town of Mpeketoni in minibuses. Mpeketoni is 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the Lamu archipelago, a popular tourist destination. The heavily armed men attacked hotels, restaurants, and government offices, singling out non-Muslims for execution. The attacks were the worst terrorist incident in Kenya since the Westgate shopping center massacre in Nairobi in September 2013.

The Somali terrorist group al-Shabab (Youths) claimed responsibility for most of the 2014 violence, saying it was retaliation for Kenya’s military presence since 2011 in neighboring Somalia in the fight against al-Shabab.

The group, which is aligned with the al-Qaeda terrorist organization, declared Kenya a "war zone" and warned foreigners to stay away. As a result, tourism—which drives one-eighth of the economy and supports more than half a million jobs—was hit hard in 2014.

Police criticized for failing to respond to the attacks.

Polygamy. President Jovenel Moïse’s wife, who holds a law degree, refused to allow him to marry a second woman. The president of Haiti said his marriage to his second wife was a violation of the constitution and the law. In July, police arrested 10 of the 17 women who had been living with the president.

Court case. On October 10, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, ruled that the leaders of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were not eligible for trial for war crimes.

Korea, North. An South Korea on Oct. 4, 2014, North Korean soldiers killed a South Korean soldier. The North Korean soldiers crossed the military border into South Korea near the border town of Yeoncheon and were killed in a firefight. South Korean soldiers returned fire, killing the North Korean soldiers. The two Koreas are divided by the border, which has been a source of tension for decades.

Kim’s absence from the North Korean leadership was announced in late September 2014. Kim Jong-un was appointed the leader of the Workers’ Party of Korea and the state’s supreme leader. Kim Jong-un is the third generation of the Kim family to hold the position of supreme leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Kim Jong-un’s elevation to the position of supreme leader was a significant development in North Korean politics, as it marked the passing of power from his father, Kim Jong-il, to his son, Kim Jong-un.

On October 14, Kim Jong-un made a visit to a housing project, during which he inspected the construction site and spoke to the workers. Some reports suggested that Kim Jong-un was in poor health, but this has not been confirmed.