

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM



Earlier this year, many organizations signed a letter asking California Governor Gavin Newsom to Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism:

Alpha Epsilon Pi
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
Association of Jewish Educators
B'nai B'rith International
California Israel Chamber of Commerce
Combat Antisemitism Movement
Educators Caucus for Israel
Hadassah
Hillel at Davis and Sacramento
Hillel San Diego
Hillel at UCLA
Holocaust Museum LA
Iranian American Jewish Federation (IAJF)
Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Israeli American Council (IAC)
Jewish Federation of San Diego
JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the
Middle East and North Africa
NEA Jewish Affairs Caucus
Progressive Zionists of California
Sephardic Education Center
Simon Wiesenthal Center
Stand With Us
WIZO: Women's International
Zionist Organization
30 Years After

WHAT IS THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM?

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

The IHRA provides these examples to serve as illustrations of antisemitism:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF ANTISEMITISM IN PUBLIC LIFE, THE MEDIA, SCHOOLS, THE WORKPLACE, AND IN THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE COULD, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE OVERALL CONTEXT INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

WHY IS THE IHRA DEFINITION NEEDED AND HOW IS IT HELPFUL?

Israeli Special Envoy for Combatting Antisemitism Michal Cotler-Wunsh addressing antisemitism at the United Nations in the wake of October 7th:

"Without the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism we will not be able, not even for a moment, to say that it is committed to identifying and combatting antisemitism. Without a definition we cannot identify or combat anything. And 10/7 made very clear, not only in the atrocities perpetrated but in the responses to the atrocities, that anti-Zionism is the mutated mainstream form of antisemitism which, in order to be able to ensure 'never again' we will have to identify and combat."

The American Jewish Committee's 2022 State of Antisemitism in America report found that

a quarter of Americans are unfamiliar with the term antisemitism and one-third of these individuals feel that **antisemitism isn't regarded as seriously as other forms of hate**, despite its deadly consequences.

In order to most effectively combat antisemitism, it must first be defined. The non-legally binding IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is an invaluable tool in comprehending and combating antisemitism, in all its manifestations. It is a framework that can be employed in complete alignment with the fundamental rights of every individual.

HOW SHOULD THE IHRA DEFINITION BE USED?

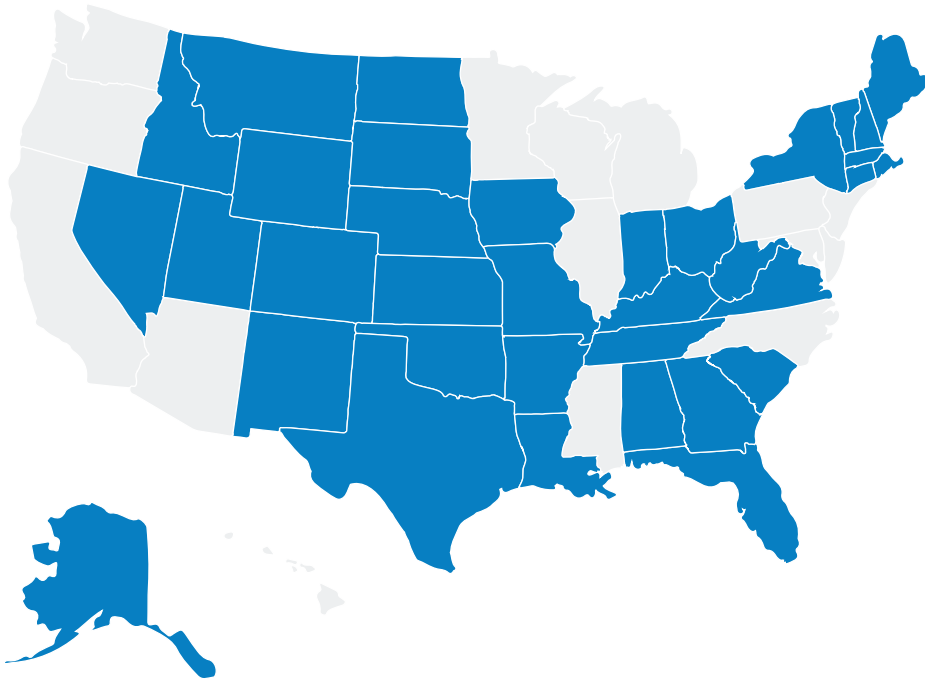
The IHRA Definition is intended to be utilized as non-legally binding guidance and education for a range of stakeholders including law enforcement, campus administrators and other institutions and entities to better enable them to identify antisemitism and gather and analyze relevant data. Today, governments, campus administrators, law enforcement bodies and civil society organizations around the world all use the IHRA Definition as an important tool to help educate on anti-Jewish bias, help assess claims of antisemitism, assist in identifying whether a crime might also be categorized as a hate crime targeting Jews, and aid in determining – again, taking into consideration the relevant facts and circumstances – whether certain conduct adversely affecting an individual or group may constitute antisemitic discrimination under an existing law or code.

WHY IS THE IHRA DEFINITION IMPORTANT?

The IHRA Definition is an important tool for education and guidance on antisemitism. As antisemitic incidents have increased worldwide, governments and civil society have sought ways to speak out against antisemitism and ensure that there is awareness of its real-life manifestations and impact. The definition should not be viewed as a substitute or replacement for existing laws. It is not a "charging authority." Nonetheless, it is critical as guidance. It is one important tool that government, educational authorities and civil society institutions can use to illustrate, and thus help identify, contemporary examples of antisemitic expressions that not everyone may realize play on longstanding and deeply harmful anti-Jewish tropes or other forms of animus towards the Jewish religion or Jewish people.

WHO SUPPORTS THE IHRA DEFINITION?

The IHRA definition has gained widespread international recognition and endorsement for its comprehensive and effective approach in identifying antisemitism. The definition was cited in President Biden's landmark [White House National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) as the most prominent antisemitism definition that the United States has embraced. More than 30 U.S. states and 40 nations have adopted the definition, as have a multitude of civil society organizations, including the Global Imam Council – the world's largest international non-governmental body of cross-denominational Muslim religious leaders.



The IHRA definition has been adopted by 1,116+ entities, 39 countries, 464+ regional, state (36), and local government bodies, and the Global Imams Council.

KEY ADOPTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS:

- Presidential Executive Order (EO) 13899 on Combating Anti-Semitism directs the US Department of Education to refer to IHRA working definition of antisemitism and its contemporary examples, when investigating allegations of anti-Semitism under Title VI.
- On November 13, 2023, US Department of Education Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon told Jewish organization leaders that IHRA is the definition her Office for Civil Rights uses when investigating Title VI complaints.
- University of California Regents [Policy 4403](#) includes Statement of Principles Against Intolerance, which calls on University leaders "actively to challenge anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination when and whenever they emerge within the University community." The report informing this condemned "antisemitic forms of Anti-Zionism."

This guide was compiled by JIMENA and cites information and language from the Anti-Defamation League, Combat Antisemitism Movement, and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance