

A Guide To Understanding And Adopting

IHRA



Working Definition of Antisemitism

**The first step to fighting
antisemitism is to define it.**

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
MONITOR

— FOCUS —

**An old beast re-awoken,
anti-Semitism stalks
Europe, US once more**

The New York Times

**'There Is Still So Much Evil': Growing
Anti-Semitism Stuns American Jews**

TIME

**Surge in Anti-Semitic Attacks Has Caused a 'Sense of
Emergency' Among Jews Worldwide, New Report Says**

THE
NEW YORKER

**HOW ANTI-SEMITISM RISES ON
THE LEFT AND RIGHT**

What is the problem?

Antisemitism: The oldest hatred is a growing threat

In the decades after the Holocaust and expulsion of Jews from Arab states, many assumed that hatred against Jews was on the decline. Yet this dangerous virus has emerged again around the globe, including in the United States.

Cases of assault, harassment, and vandalism against Jews are at near-historic levels in the U.S., Canada, the UK, and worldwide. Although less than two percent of the U.S. population is Jewish, the FBI reports that over 60 percent of religiously motivated crimes are directed against Jews.

In person and online, from coast to coast and across the world, there are unprovoked attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions. Synagogues and Jewish centers are vandalized, and there are attempts to breach synagogues while worshipers are inside, with the intent to harm. The majority of U.S. Jews report experiencing antisemitism.

The memory of the deadly attacks in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway have made American Jews feel more vulnerable than anyone could have imagined. Jewish students—especially those who wear Jewish symbols, support Israel's existence, and refuse to reject their religious, ethnic, and/or national identity—often find themselves subject to discrimination, bullying, and racism.

npr

NATIONAL

**Synagogue Shooting Follows Historic Rise In
Anti-Semitic Incidents And Online Attacks**

Antisemitism Snapshot

ITALY, JANUARY 15, 2021: Zoom bombers shout “Jews to the ovens” at the online launch of a book about the Holocaust.

TUFTS UNIVERSITY, FEBRUARY 2021: Max Price, a member of the Tufts Community Student Union Judiciary, was threatened with impeachment because he identified with his Jewish heritage and connection to Israel.

THE TUFTS DAILY

The independent student newspaper of Tufts University

Judiciary member alleges discrimination, garners national attention; members of SJP, TCU Senate face harassment

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT,

MARCH 2021: Swastikas were painted on the chemistry building on the first day of Passover and again a couple of days later on another building nearby.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, APRIL 2021: AEPi, a predominantly Jewish fraternity, was egged on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

LOS ANGELES, MAY 18, 2021:

A group waving the Palestinian flag confronted diners in a restaurant. They asked who was Jewish before viciously assaulting a Jewish man and a Lebanese Christian man who came to his defense.

Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

L.A. sushi restaurant attack is being investigated as an antisemitic hate crime

LOS ANGELES, MAY 18, 2021: Anti-Israel demonstrators in a caravan chased an Orthodox Jewish man through a parking lot as he ran away on foot.

BAHÍA BLANCA, ARGENTINA, MAY 18, 2021: A building belonging to the Jewish community was vandalized with graffiti saying, “We are going to kill you” and “Jewish rats,” alongside a Jewish Star of David.

NEW YORK CITY, MAY 20, 2021: Joseph Borgen, 29, was beaten by a group of people shouting antisemitic statements in the middle of a New York street.

Newsweek

NEWS

Joseph Borgen, Jewish Man Beaten in NYC Attack, Says Face 'Felt Like It Was on Fire' as Suspect Arrested

BERLIN, GERMANY, MAY 22, 2021: A visibly Jewish man was approached by three men and punched in the face.

LONDON, MAY 25, 2021: In central London, an anti-Israel protester walked through the streets with a group, shouting, "We'll find some Jews there!" and "We want the Zionists! We want their blood!" Video footage shows a police officer taking no action in response.

TORONTO, CANADA, MAY 28, 2021: Anti-Israel protesters violently attacked and injured pro-Israel protesters and reportedly sexually assaulted a Jewish woman.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA, MAY 28, 2021: A non-Jewish woman was harassed and assaulted on the train for reading a book about Jewish history. Police were investigated for responding to the incident with disinterest and even suggesting she shouldn't have been reading the book.

MONTREAL, CANADA, JUNE 28, 2021: Two kosher bakeries were targeted by arsonists.

BOSTON, JULY 1, 2021: Rabbi Shlomo Noginski was stabbed eight times outside a Jewish school by an individual with a documented history of antisemitism.

SYRACUSE, NY, JULY 10, 2021: A group of Syracuse University students was verbally harassed with antisemitic slurs and egged by someone in a vehicle.

MONTREAL GAZETTE

News / Local News

Montreal police investigate suspicious fire at bakery in St-Laurent

Police are trying to determine whether the fire is related to a similar incident this month at another kosher business in the same strip mall.

Antisemitism Snapshot These incidents are a very small sample of antisemitism in 2021.

For further information, visit www.standwithus.com/ihra, which contains links to media articles about the above antisemitic incidents.

Skyrocketing antisemitism on social media

The recent spate of antisemitic attacks is being fueled in part by activities on social media, where conspiracy theories spread quickly and easily without being fact-checked. The failure of social media platforms to curtail the spread of hatred against Jews online only serves to fan the flames of a reality in which antisemitic incidents are higher than they have been in decades.



ANTISEMITISM IS A PROBLEM, AND IT WON'T SOLVE ITSELF!

Why is a widely accepted modern definition of antisemitism needed?



1 Antisemitism evolves over time.

Antisemitism “mutates” and can occur in new ways that are hard for leaders and institutions to identify. Anti-Jewish racism was once focused on the religion of Jews, vilifying them for not accepting Christianity or for other aspects of their religious beliefs and traditions that made them different. Then it focused on the notion of race, demonizing Jews for being inferior to “pure-white” Aryans. Depending on the source of the hatred, it has focused on economic issues, accusing Jews of being capitalists or communists.

It can connect to nationalism, first faulting Jews for being stateless and later discriminating against Jews for having their own state. It comes from the far left, the far right, Islamist extremist groups, and others. Often, these groups will take the same antisemitic slur or conspiracy theory and change it slightly

to fit their audience’s political and cultural biases. We can’t fight the antisemitic virus of 2021 if we only recognize the version from 1942. Because antisemitism comes in many forms, people may have no idea when they are witnessing—or even engaging in—antisemitism.

2 Perpetrators attempt to camouflage their antisemitism.

Without a consistent definition, those who perpetrate antisemitism will attempt to define the term to exclude their own bigotry. As famed historian Raul Hilberg noted, “The Nazis did not call themselves anti-Semites.” Those who engage in modern forms of antisemitism are often no different. Perpetrators target Jews for supporting Israel’s existence yet claim that their intent was “anti-Israel, not anti-Jewish.” At multiple universities, organizations that oppose Israel’s existence—a stance the vast majority of Jews see as antisemitic—have pushed their own “definitions of antisemitism.” Naturally, these self-serving definitions are crafted to exclude the forms of hatred these groups promote.




There are many other deeply disturbing examples of how the line is crossed. For instance, Grafton Thomas, the man guilty of a murderous machete attack in Monsey, NY, googled “Zionist temple near me” to select his target during the Jewish holiday of Chanukah.

In Montreal, an admitted supporter of the anti-Zionist Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement was arrested for painting swastikas on a synagogue of the largest city in Canada’s Québec province. He also had a tank of gasoline to set the temple on fire. This was not the first time someone with anti-Zionist views vandalized a Jewish synagogue.



Montreal

Suspect charged after swastikas painted on Westmount synagogue



Zionism means support for the basic rights of Jewish people to self-determination in their 3,000-year-old ancestral home. The incidents above highlight the importance of providing communities, organizations, educational institutions, and others with a definition that recognizes that for many Jews, Zionism is an inherent component of their identity and not merely a political point of view.

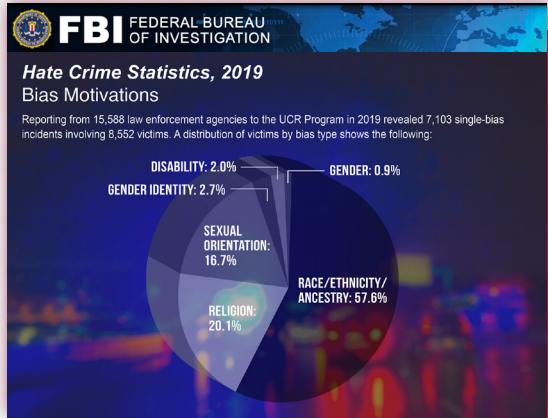
3 Like all groups, Jews define their own experiences of oppression.

Our society generally accepts that each community gets to define its own oppression. One gender doesn't get to tell the other what is sexist toward the latter. One group doesn't have the authority to determine what behaviors are racist toward another group. Jews have the right to define how they experience antisemitism, especially in environments where antisemitic incidents are commonly dismissed. Yet, in an American Jewish Committee survey of young adults, two-thirds said it would make no difference to them if a "Jewish person or organization considered a statement or idea to be antisemitic." Antisemitism cannot be taken seriously if the experiences of its primary targets—Jews—are dismissed. If this hatred is not taken seriously, it will grow unchecked.

4 Confusion about antisemitism leads to:

A. UNDERREPORTING.

To record and track antisemitism, we need to know what it is. Collecting data about antisemitism is an important tool in fighting this hatred. According to a recently released American Jewish Committee Report, *more than half* of Americans, 18 to 29 years old, said they didn't know the meaning of the word antisemitism. Thirty percent said they had heard the term but were not sure what it meant. Almost a quarter said they had never even heard the word at all.



B. LACK OF JUSTICE.

Antisemitic acts are often not identified because of a lack of clarity about what antisemitism is.

Ilan Halimi, a 23-year-old French Jew, was tied up, stripped naked, gagged, beaten, humiliated, mutilated, and set on fire while still alive. Subscribing to an antisemitic stereotype that all Jews are rich, the perpetrators abducted and held him for ransom. There was no charge of antisemitism as an aggravating factor in this murder case until the trial was in progress and the perpetrator demonstrated his contempt for “Zionist terrorists” and “bearded men wearing kippahs.” Only then did magistrates add antisemitism as an aggravating factor.

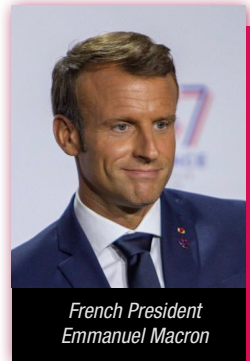


C. MORE CRIME.

Antisemitism, undiagnosed and unrecognized, has led to increased violence against Jews. On February 19, 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron warned his nation,

“For the first time in many years, antisemitism is killing people again in France,” and acknowledged that French authorities “did not know how to react effectively.”

The U.S. is finding itself in the same dangerous situation.



French President
Emmanuel Macron

5 Lack of understanding leads to unintentional antisemitic activity.

When individuals fail to understand antisemitism, they may engage in antisemitic rhetoric or conduct without meaning to. There are numerous examples of people being publicly exposed for using antisemitic slurs or invoking antisemitic stereotypes only to respond that they did not understand the meaning of a particular antisemitic term or phrase and its harmful impact on Jewish people. Education, including through a consistent definition, allows individuals to self-monitor, curtailing instances of unintentional antisemitism.



STATEMENT

"I AM DEEPLY SORRY FOR USING AN ANTI-SEMITIC SLUR... WHILE I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE WORD MEANT AT THE TIME, MY IGNORANCE ABOUT ITS HISTORY AND HOW OFFENSIVE IT IS TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS ABSOLUTELY NOT AN EXCUSE AND I WAS JUST WRONG... I AM COMMITTED TO PROPERLY SEEKING OUT PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP EDUCATE ME ABOUT THIS TYPE OF HATE."

5:46 70° 

INE DOSE, LIKE SPECIAL SHIPPING EQUIPMENT AND THE MEDICAL SCRUBS AND ID BADGE

antisemitism

Semitism is hostility to and prej
Jewish people. The extreme right-
Front promoted anti-semitism.



THE IHRA WORKING 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.

How does the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism meet these needs?

The IHRA Working Definition:

- 1 Takes into account both contemporary and classic antisemitism. The Definition includes examples that describe 11 ways in which antisemitism may manifest today. Six of the examples address contemporary antisemitism involving Israel, often treated as the Jewish collective, either by applying classic antisemitic slurs to the Jewish state itself or targeting Jews collectively for real or imagined connection to Israel. They include:

- 
- Accusing Jews of being more loyal to Israel or to a global Jewish agenda than to their home countries.
 - Denying Jews the right to self-determination or calling Israel a “racist endeavor.”
 - Applying a double standard to Israel that isn’t applied to other countries.
 - Applying classic antisemitic smears, like the blood libel, to Israel.
 - Comparing Israel to the Nazis.
 - Holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel’s actions.

2 Was developed by experts who express the needs of the victims rather than the biases of the perpetrators. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is an international network of leading academics, museum heads, and nonprofit leaders from 34 countries that promotes Holocaust research and education. In 2016, facing rising antisemitism around the world, IHRA drafted a definition of antisemitism aimed at helping countries, institutions, and organizations recognize, monitor, and record antisemitism.

3 Is the consensus-driven choice of the world’s democracies and has been adopted or endorsed by a wide range of governments, institutions, and organizations. It has been:

- Posted on the U.S. State Department website since 2010.
- Used by the U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, and State.
- Adopted by governments of over 30 countries.
- Signed onto by the 35 governments that are members of IHRA.
- Used by the Justice Ministries of Austria and Germany.
- Adopted by the European Union.
- Adopted by the Global Imams Council.
- Supported by both Republican and Democrat presidential administrations.

Visit www.standwithus.com/ihra for updates on the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

ADOPTING AND USING IHRA CAN:

Raise Awareness
ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

Help Identify Cases
INVOLVING ANTISEMITISM

Increase Reporting
OF ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

Assess Intent
OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Assist In Data Recording
ABOUT ANTISEMITISM



MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISINFORMATION

What does the IHRA definition *not do*?

There has been controversy, and sometimes intentional confusion, about the IHRA Working Definition. Here are some of the claims made by critics, along with facts and context responding to those claims.

CLAIM 1

*The IHRA Definition is **redundant**; we already have non-discrimination laws.*

RESPONSE

The IHRA Definition is not a law. It is simply a guiding tool for how to apply existing rules and laws where antisemitism may be involved. The IHRA Definition is the international consensus definition of antisemitism; there is nothing else that provides this type of consistency and clarity. Moreover, if current laws were sufficient without a definition of antisemitism, we would not see ongoing confusion about how to identify, report, and address antisemitism.

CLAIM 2

*The IHRA Definition **infringes** upon First Amendment (free speech) rights.*

RESPONSE

The IHRA Definition does not require or prohibit any speech at all. It has no enforcement mechanism. Like any definition in a dictionary, it is a tool for identifying antisemitism, not silencing or punishing any type of speech. Leaders and institutions have their own free speech rights and responsibilities to condemn incidents of hatred and bigotry, and even use them as teachable moments. Referencing IHRA to confront cases of antisemitism in this way does not violate anyone's constitutional rights because no one

has a right to be free from criticism for promoting hate. Nor does the IHRA Definition have a “chilling effect” on criticism of Israel, as evidenced by the massive amount of criticism we see in many contexts across the country.

CLAIM 3

*The IHRA Definition **punishes/silences** criticism of Israel by labeling it as antisemitism.*

RESPONSE

This is blatantly false. In fact, the IHRA Definition expressly recognizes that criticism of Israel, similar to criticism leveled at other countries, cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Israel-related examples within the IHRA Definition include the use of double standards, demonization, and/or delegitimization, not mere criticism. As noted previously, nothing in the IHRA Definition punishes or silences any speech, including speech about Israel, whether antisemitic or not.

CLAIM 4

*The IHRA Definition **singles out** Jews for special (i.e., privileged) treatment.*

RESPONSE

The IHRA Definition is not a form of special protection or treatment. It provides an understanding of what constitutes an existing form of bigotry/discrimination that can be difficult to identify because of the many different ways it appears.

CLAIM 5

*Adoption of the IHRA Definition **harms** Palestinians.*

RESPONSE

Identifying bigotry or discrimination against one group does not harm any other group. Those who choose to “support” the Palestinian people by engaging in bigoted speech

against Jews or Israelis may continue those efforts. The IHRA Definition may identify some of that speech as antisemitic, but it does nothing to silence or punish that speech. Moreover, the desire of some to engage in bigoted speech is not a reason to shy away from identifying and condemning that speech for what it is (i.e., racism, sexism, antisemitism, etc.).

CLAIM 6

*The IHRA Definition and/or its supporters are too **rigid** or “dogmatic.”*

RESPONSE

Words matter. The text of the Definition must be the starting point for discussions about fighting antisemitism at an institutional level. The Definition is explicitly worded in non-dogmatic terms, with words such as “may,” “might,” and “could.” None of the examples of antisemitism provided within the Definition are automatically judged to be antisemitism without examining the context. The Definition makes clear that context is key: “Contemporary examples of antisemitism...could, taking into account the overall context, include.”

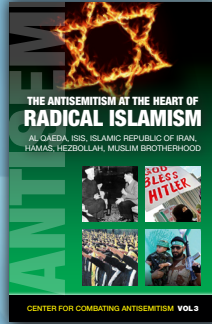
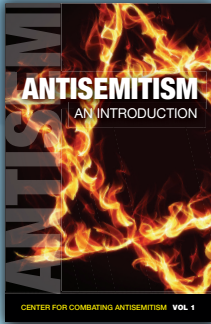
Take the First Step in Combating Antisemitism!

Have **YOUR** institution, agency, organization, department, church, synagogue, temple, tribe, mosque, club, city, village, library, school, sports team, and/or business adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

TO START, GO TO

www.standwithus.com/ihra

For more in-depth reading on this complex subject, the StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism has published dozens of booklets, including a four-part introduction to antisemitism in all its permutations:



**Download booklets at standwithus.com/booklets
Order multiple copies at standwithus.com/shop**

Please Support StandWithUs

Send Your Generous Donation to:

StandWithUs, PO Box 341069 • Los Angeles, CA 90034-1069
info@standwithus.com • 310.836.6140

Donate Online at standwithus.com/donate



**Visit the Center for Combating Antisemitism at
StandUpToHatred.com**

StandWithUs (a.k.a. Israel Emergency Alliance) is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. © 2021 StandWithUs. All rights reserved.

**FOLLOW STANDWITHUS
TO STAY INFORMED!**



THIS BOOKLET SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GENEROUS GRANT FROM THE
**Doris Factor Endowment Fund of the
Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles**

Help Us Send This Publication to Others
Order this or other booklets at standwithus.com/shop