

IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

Support for the adoption and endorsement of the IHRA definition at the state & local levels

Purpose & Overview

A clear, consistent definition of antisemitism is essential to effectively combating rising hate. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism provides this clarity, offering the world's most widely recognized and adopted standard. Accompanied by practical, real-world examples, the definition equips policymakers, educators, and community leaders with a shared framework to identify, address, and prevent antisemitism across institutions, campuses, and public life. It serves as a foundational tool for promoting safety, accountability, and inclusive democratic values. Jewish Federations of North America encourage the adoption and usage of the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples at the federal, state and local levels.

What Does IHRA Do?



IHRA provides clarity for decision makers

Adopting IHRA helps leaders identify antisemitism across their communities and institutions, enabling effective action to stop and prevent it.



IHRA identifies common manifestations

Examples include targeting Jews or Jewish institutions, denying Jewish self-determination, promoting conspiracy theories about Jews, and minimizing or denying the Holocaust.



IHRA promotes education & human rights

IHRA is rooted in a commitment to historical memory, tolerance, inclusion, and peace.



IHRA protects freedom of speech

The definition explicitly allows for legitimate criticism of the policies of Israel's government.

Key Facts about the IHRA Definition

- The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is a multinational body created in the aftermath of global genocides and formally adopted the definition in 2016.
- The IHRA definition is used by more than 1,200 governments, agencies, and organizations worldwide. It is the globally accepted standard, valued for its clarity, breadth, and widespread adoption across the mainstream Jewish community.
- IHRA defines antisemitism as:

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.
- Its strength lies in its 11 contemporary examples, detailing real-world expressions of modern antisemitism.
- In the United States, IHRA is adopted by the State Department, 37 states, 135 cities and municipalities, and is embedded in the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. Both the Trump and Biden Administrations have adopted its use for executive agencies, such as the Office of Civil Rights for the Education, Health & Human Services, and Justice Departments.
- Adoption of alternative definitions risks creating confusion in identifying antisemitism.
- A consistent definition of antisemitism helps:
 - Law enforcement identify bias incidents
 - Schools and universities distinguish prejudice from political debate
 - Governments track and report incidents accurately
 - Train human rights monitoring agencies
 - Communities respond consistently to hate

Free Speech Considerations

1

Critics sometimes inaccurately claim that codifying the IHRA definition limits criticism of Israel.

In fact, the IHRA definition explicitly differentiates between antisemitism and legitimate political criticism, helping decision makers distinguish between the two.

2

IHRA does not restrict First Amendment rights.

Even where adopted, IHRA does not limit the ability of someone to say or write even harshly critical things about Israel, its government or Zionism. Rather, IHRA serves as an invaluable tool to clearly and accurately identify when conduct is motivated by or promotes antisemitism.

3

IHRA ensures antisemitic bias is recognized on par with other protected classes by identifying when it violates Jews' civil rights.

The definition does not create special categories, privileges, penalties, or new rights. It promotes consistency and fairness across all forms of hate.