

**Resolution Adopting the International Holocaust
Remembrance Alliance *Working Definition of Antisemitism***
Adopted by the 2020 JCPA Delegates Assembly

In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), a consortium of (then) 31 countries—including the U.S. and Israel—developed and formally adopted the *Working Definition of Antisemitism*. This definition is a useful tool for combatting hate and antisemitism in the U.S. and around the world.

Antisemitism and hate crimes against Jews are increasing. The shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, at the Chabad of Poway in California, and at the Kosher grocery store in Jersey City, as well as the mass stabbing in Monsey have laid bare the effects of growing antisemitism in the U.S. over the past five years. The number of antisemitic incidents has risen by 61%, according to the Anti-Defamation League. White supremacist activity has surged nationwide.¹ Since 2016, there has been an 89% increase of antisemitic incidents on college campuses.² Of all anti-religious hate crimes reported to the FBI in 2018, almost 60% of those were directed at Jews and Jewish institutions, despite Jews making up less than 2% of the U.S. population.³ All but four states reported antisemitic incidents in 2018. A recent poll by the American Jewish Committee found that 88% of the Jews they spoke with considered antisemitism a problem in the U.S. today and 31% had avoided wearing, carrying or displaying things that might help people identify them as Jewish.⁴

Government and non-government agencies across the globe, including the U.S. Department of State, are using the *Working Definition of Antisemitism* to train police, prosecutors, and judges, and to educate and inform civil society monitors, and educators. On December 11, 2019, the President signed an Executive Order that directs the Department of Education to consider the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples—to the extent they

¹ www.adl.org/2018-audit-H

² www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/12/05/anti-semitic-incidents-surge-college-campuses-after-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting

³ ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2018/topic-pages/victims

⁴ www.ajc.org/AntisemitismSurvey2019

are useful and in compliance with the First Amendment—when identifying evidence of discrimination or discriminatory intent under Title VI.⁵

Implementation of this Executive Order should allow for critique of Israeli policy or government, but draw the line when such expression becomes targeted, intentional, unlawful, discriminatory intimidation or harassment of Jewish students that deprives them of an equal educational opportunity. The availability of a Title VI remedy is important as a backstop, but the first obligation to respond to antisemitism on campus lies with teachers and administrators. The federal government should become involved only when a school or university fails to respond adequately in a timely manner.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs:

- Adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) non-legally binding [*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.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

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.

⁵ www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-combating-anti-semitism

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere 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 of 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 the State of Israel is a racist endeavor.*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] 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.”*
- JCPA believes that:
 - Hate crimes and other criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether people or property, are intentionally selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews;
 - Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews because they are Jewish of opportunities or services available to others.
 - Antisemitism is linked to other forms of hate and bigotry. Its eradication is therefore in the interest of all countries and communities.
- Acknowledges that criticism of a particular policy or practice of Israel’s government, even if harsh, may not be antisemitic if based on the same standards applied to the governments of other countries.
- Recognizes that antisemitic speech, and even harsh criticism of Israel or its government, may be protected by the U.S. and State Constitutions, while also affirming the right and obligation to oppose antisemitic messages to the full extent allowed by law.
- Believes that efforts to identify, address, and educate around antisemitism must not be used to undermine constitutional right to free speech, including the right to protest or criticize the policies of the United States, Israel, or other governments.

The Jewish community relations field should:

- Utilize the *Working Definition of Antisemitism*, among other training and education resources, as a tool when engaging and educating policymakers, law enforcement, educators, and community leaders, as well as other Jewish and non-Jewish community partners.
- Encourage the IHRA definition's use as guidance for educators, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials in recognizing antisemitic activity or determining whether an alleged act was motivated by discriminatory antisemitic intent.
- Use the *Working Definition of Antisemitism* as a resource in carrying out the existing recommendations for the community relations field, as outlined in the 2015 JCPA Resolution on Antisemitism.