

Antisemitism Definitions

Antisemitism is hostility, prejudice, hatred, or violence against Jews as Jews. Over the past few years, several definitions of antisemitism have risen to prominence. There is currently a movement to codify into law the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition and its “contemporary examples”. On the surface this seems benign, but the IHRA definition has been used repeatedly by bad faith actors to suppress free speech, namely the freedom to publicly criticize the actions of the Israeli government, rather than targeting actual acts of antisemitism. T’ruah, along with partner organizations from the Progressive Israel Network (PIN) – Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, Habonim Dror North America, Hashomer Hatzair World Movement, Jewish Labor Committee, J Street, New Israel Fund, Partners for Progressive Israel, and Reconstructing Judaism – opposes the codification of any definition of antisemitism into law, including the IHRA definition. [This is the statement](#) PIN put out in 2021 on our group’s collective opposition to the codification of IHRA.

The following definitions and links to more information are provided to give more context. Though there is significant overlap in the phrasing of the definitions themselves, an important distinction is in the “contemporary examples” of the IHRA definition. See below for some of those examples.

None of these definitions was intended for codification into policy or law. There’s no codified definition of any other form of bigotry, and with good reason: No definition can allow for the flexibility required to address antisemitism or other bigotries as they arise. Unless we can accurately identify antisemitism, we won’t be able to adequately fight it.

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism

History: The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism is a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today. It includes a [preamble](#), [definition](#), and a set of 15 [guidelines](#) that provide detailed guidance for those seeking to recognize antisemitism in order to craft responses. It was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression.

Definition: Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility, or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).

<https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>

The Nexus Document

History: This definition of antisemitism, and the examples that follow, derive from a White Paper drafted by the Nexus Task Force, which examines the issues at the nexus of antisemitism and Israel in American politics. The Task Force was a project of the Knight Program on Media and Religion at the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism at USC. The definition is designed as a guide for policymakers and community leaders as they grapple with the complexities at the intersection of Israel and antisemitism.

Definition: Antisemitism consists of anti-Jewish beliefs, attitudes, actions or systemic conditions. It includes negative beliefs and feelings about Jews, hostile behavior directed against Jews (because they are Jews), and conditions that discriminate against Jews and significantly impede their ability to participate as equals in political, religious, cultural, economic, or social life.

<https://israelandantisemitism.com/the-nexus-document/>

The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) Definition

History: With evidence that the scourge of antisemitism is once again on the rise, the IHRA has resolved to take a leading role in combating it. But to begin to address the problem of antisemitism, there must be clarity about what [antisemitism](#) is. The experts in the IHRA's Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial built international consensus around a non-legally binding [working definition](#) of antisemitism, which was then adopted by the Plenary. By doing so, the IHRA set an example of responsible conduct for other international fora and provided an important practical tool for its Member Countries.

Definition: 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.

Sample “contemporary examples”:

- Applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- 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.

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>