



Palestinian American Community Center's IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism Informational Packet

What is IHRA?

IHRA stands for the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#). It is an intergovernmental organization that unites governments and experts to strengthen, advance, and promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research worldwide and to uphold the commitments of the 2000 Stockholm Declaration and the 2020 Ministerial Declaration.

What is IHRA's proposed definition of anti-semitism?

The IHRA definition of antisemitism falsely equates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, essentially working to censor Palestinians or those who express criticism of Israel.

Learn more about Zionism here: <https://uscpr.org/activist-resource/global-impact-of-zionism/>

Jewish Voice for Peace notes:

"The definition was first developed by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in 2004 to monitor incidents of antisemitism in Europe. It was adopted by the IHRA as a working definition in 2014. Groups opposed to Palestinian rights have been aggressively advocating for the definition to be used in federal and state law, as well as academic settings, to determine whether an incident was or was not antisemitic. It is unfit for this purpose — even the definition's author opposes its usage as a proscriptive tool (see below).

The definition falsely centers criticisms of Israel or Zionism as antisemitism, rather than focusing on attacks against Jewish people and Judaism. The definition lists 11 "examples" of antisemitism, a staggering seven of which are about criticism of Israel and Zionism. This incorrectly and dangerously equates legitimate critique of the Israeli government and advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism. The definition is already being wielded in this way to silence and censor Palestinian human rights advocates and academics. This is a threat to Palestinian freedom, free speech, scholarly inquiry on the Middle East, academic freedom on campuses, and the ability of nonprofits to support Palestinian human rights. It establishes a dangerous norm for governments across the world.

Furthermore, the definition does not serve the fight against antisemitism or other racism. It does not differentiate between systemic and individual antisemitism, nor does it help identify the different forms of beliefs, tropes, speech acts, micro-aggressions, discrimination, property damage and outright personal violence that racism and antisemitism often take. For example, the IHRA working definition does nothing to explain or illuminate the white supremacist ideology that drove both the shooter targeting Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue and the shooter



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targeting Mexicans and Mexican-Americans at the El Paso Walmart. Nor does it address how antisemitism rises when democratic systems are in peril.”

Read more from JVP about IHRA here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_hLMomYGIOyKc99nYthyE2-LEEK37V1ht2xyU6Y3NDY/edit

Two Jewish activists who are “invested in antiracist and anti-colonial movements from the United States to Palestine and have been following, with interest and concern, progressive Jewish discussions of anti-Semitism write about their concerns with false definitions of anti-Semitism” also warn against the conflation of anti-semitism with anti-Zionism.

Read their article here:

<https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/donna-nevel-mark-tseng-putterman-what-anti-semitism-is/>



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Why is the proposed IHRA definition problematic?

By directly associating criticisms of Israel with antisemitism, the IHRA definition seeks to silence advocates for Palestinian human rights and justice against Israeli apartheid. The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights notes that “institutionally, the IHRA definition of antisemitism is used to censor and repress Palestinian activism and organizing efforts. Interpersonally, the IHRA definition of antisemitism works to isolate and condemn Palestinian(s) (students) for fighting against their oppression. In any case, the IHRA definition of antisemitism works to target and attack Palestinians, destroy their careers, educational opportunities, and ruin their reputations.”

As PACC staff shared a couple months ago in our op-ed, we again stress that:

The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is widely disputed and considered problematic for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the majority of the examples listed include direct references to the State of Israel. For instance, “claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor” falls into the category of anti-Semitism according to the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Meanwhile, several human rights and civic society organizations have exposed Israel’s treatment of Palestinians as unjust. In fact, Amnesty International recently published a 280-page report called “Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: A Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity,” which condemns the State of Israel for maintaining a violent system of oppression. Examples of injustices include forced displacement and dispossession, unlawful killings and serious injuries, denial of basic rights and freedoms, and persecution.

It’s important to keep in mind that when Palestinian advocates criticize Israel, we are not critiquing Judaism and the Jewish identity. Jewish people have always been a part of Palestine’s history and were equal citizens side-by-side with Palestinian Muslims and Christians before the inception of Israel. Instead, we are challenging and opposing Zionism, which is a nationalist political ideology that privileges one group of people over another and is grounded in white-supremacist and colonial logic. In her debut memoir, “They Called Me A Lioness: A Palestinian Girl’s Fight for Freedom,” Ahed Timimi explains: “Zionism is the ideology that says that historic Palestine must be a country for [Israeli] Jews only. Zionism is what led to the dispossession of our land, which continues to be seized and occupied.”

Read the rest of PACC’s op-ed here:

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2023/02/14/nj-palestinian-americans-views-on-anti-semitism-definitions/69900542007/>



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What are we asking from you?

Vote no on the resolution to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. We all agree that anti-Semitism has no place in our city or state, however this definition solely focuses on protecting the state of Israel, not Jewish identity and people.

Protect your Arab, Palestinian, Jewish, and entire New Jersey community. Do not censor free speech or the condemnation of war crimes and human rights violations.

Here are some comments from our community members here:

- *Speaking against Israel is speaking against apartheid, it is not hate speech against Judaism.*
- *We are blessed to live in a country where we can criticize our own government without worrying about any negative consequences, we should not have to worry about any negative consequences or be charged with antisemitism if we decide to criticize any foreign government.*
- *I believe in protecting all the residents of New Jersey equally including the Jewish community. The IHRA definition does not do that. The IHRA definition protects Israel and silences the Palestinians and everyone who criticizes Israel.*
- *New Jersey is heavily populated with Palestinians. Both living there and also helping the economy thrive with their businesses. Do not silence us when we speak of the atrocities on Palestine.*

More resources

- [NO IHRA- AMP](#)
- [Intellectuals Respond to IHRA Definition of Antisemitism](#)
- [The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: Defining Antisemitism by Erasing Palestinians](#)
- [What Is Wrong with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism?](#)
- [The IHRA definition will not help fight anti-Semitism](#)
- [Palestinian Rights and the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism](#)
- [A Palestinian perspective on the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism](#)
- [Yes, the IHRA definition of antisemitism is intended to censor political expression](#)
- [If we endorse the IHRA definition of antisemitism we put academic freedom at risk](#)
- [Decolonize Palestine Myth Database](#)
- [Jewish Voice For Peace Unequivocally Opposes The IHRA Working Definition Of Antisemitism](#)



**Palestinian American Community Center's
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- [Distorted Definition: Redefining Antisemitism to Silence Advocacy for Palestinian Rights](#)
- [Backgrounder on Efforts to Redefine Antisemitism as a Means of Censoring Criticism of Israel](#)