



The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Isn't the IHRA Definition redundant because it duplicates existing laws and policies against discrimination?

The IHRA Definition is not a law; it is a *tool* for identifying antisemitism intended to help decisionmakers, educators, law enforcement, and the general public understand and identify a form of anti-Jewish bigotry that is experienced in many ways and is often misunderstood. In fact, the debate surrounding adopting a consensus definition further evidences its need. Although only 2% of the U.S. population, Jews are victims of approximately 60% of religiously motivated hate crimes. The IHRA Definition lends clarity to existing non-discrimination laws and is an important part of the solution to identify antisemitism.

Is it true that adopting the IHRA Definition stifles criticism of Israel and infringes upon freedom of speech?

The IHRA Definition does not prohibit or punish any speech, even hate speech. It is a tool to aid in identifying, understanding, and reporting antisemitism, not an enforcement mechanism. Concerning Israel, the IHRA Definition expressly recognizes that criticism of Israel that is similar to criticism of other countries, is not antisemitic. At the same time, IHRA recognizes that some rhetoric and actions regarding Israel can cross the line into bigotry and is a helpful tool in drawing that line. Examples of such bigotry can include demonizing Israel/Israelis, discriminating against Israel through the application of double standards, and denying Israel's right to exist.

Why not have two or three definitions? Wouldn't that be a compromise that brings more people on board?

Adopting conflicting definitions creates confusion about antisemitism. One reason the IHRA Definition is so important is that it was created with the very purpose to educate and clarify. If competing or conflicting definitions are used, there is no standard for identifying antisemitism, creating a politicized free-for-all. *This would make it easier for those who perpetrate certain forms of antisemitism to avoid being criticized or held accountable for their bigotry.* Read our fact sheets for more specific information explaining why the IHRA Definition is preferable to the [Jerusalem](#) or [Nexus](#) definition.

Some Jewish groups oppose IHRA, so why aren't they right? Isn't adopting the IHRA Definition divisive?

While Jews are not a monolith and hold diverse opinions on many subjects, there are few issues on which the Jewish community agrees more than the need to adopt and use the IHRA Definition. Just because some detractor groups self-tokenize to invalidate the definition does not mean that it is not representative. The IHRA Definition has broad consensus in the mainstream Jewish community, nationally and internationally (read [HERE](#) for details).