

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIANA REAFFIRMING SUPPORT OF THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

March 30, 2023

In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), a consortium of 32 countries—including the United States—developed and formally adopted the ***Working Definition of Antisemitism***.

In 2020, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), the national umbrella organization connecting over 125 Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs), and 16 national Jewish organizations, formally adopted the *Working Definition of Antisemitism* as well.

This definition has been adopted by 30 states, dozens of countries, and over 1,000 organizations and entities and has been endorsed by multiple US administrations.

In 2020, Jewish organizations across the state issued a strong statement in support of this definition. Today, a broad coalition of organizations reaffirm their support for this definition.

IHRA 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.”

Antisemitism Continues to Increase:

Antisemitism and hate crimes against Jews are increasing. The mass stabbing in Monsey, NY (2019), and the shootings at the Kosher grocery store in Jersey City, NJ (2019), the Chabad of Poway, CA (2019), the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA (2018), and the JCC in Overland Park, KS (2014) have laid bare the effects of growing antisemitism in the U.S. over the past decade. The Anti-Defamation League’s 2022 Audit of Antisemitic incidents shows the highest number of incidents since the organization began tracking this information.¹ Of all anti-religious hate crimes reported to the FBI in 2021, over half were directed at Jews and Jewish institutions, despite Jews making up less than 3% of the U.S. population.²

Applying the Working Definition of Antisemitism:

Government and non-government agencies across the globe, including the U.S. Department of State, are using the *Working Definition of Antisemitism* to train, educate, and inform civil society monitors and educators. The U.S. Department of Education has been instructed to consider the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples—to the extent they are useful and in compliance with the First Amendment—when identifying evidence of discrimination or discriminatory intent under Title VI. The *Working Definition of Antisemitism* allows for critique of Israeli policy or government, but draws the line when such

1. <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2022>

2. <https://www.justice.gov/crs/highlights/2021-hate-crime-statistics>

3. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/combating-antisemitism-why-the-world-needs-to-adopt-the-ihra-definition-645275>

expression becomes targeted, intentional, unlawful, discriminatory intimidation, or harassment of Jewish students that deprives them of equal educational opportunities on campuses.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism 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.

Jewish communities in Indiana recognize 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;
- Antisemitism is linked to other forms of hate and bigotry; its eradication is therefore in the interest of all countries and communities.
- 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. As well, efforts to identify and educate around antisemitism must not be used to undermine the constitutional right to free speech, including the right to protest or criticize the policies of the United States, Israel, or other governments.

We agree that the ***IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism*** is a useful tool for not only combatting hate and antisemitism, but also for educating about the differences between antisemitic hate speech and criticism of Israel.³

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ADL (Anti-Defamation League) Midwest
AJC (American Jewish Committee) Midwest
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity, Indianapolis
AMIT Women, Indianapolis
B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), Indianapolis
Borns Jewish Studies Program, Indiana University
CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center, Terre Haute
Chabad Center for Jewish Life, Indianapolis
Chabad, Indiana University
Chabad, Northwest Indiana
Chabad, Purdue University
Congregation Achduth Vesholom, Fort Wayne
Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis
Congregation Beth Shalom, Carmel
Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, Carmel
Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation, Indianapolis
Hadassah, Indianapolis
Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis, Indianapolis
Hillel, Butler University
Hillel, DePauw University
Hillel, Indiana University
Hooverwood Living, Indianapolis
Indiana Jewish Discovery Center, Indianapolis
Indiana Jewish Historical Society
Indiana University Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, Bloomington
Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, Indianapolis
Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Purdue University Fort Wayne
Israel on Campus Coalition
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana
Jewish Community Center, Indianapolis
Jewish Community Relations Council, Indianapolis
Jewish Family Services, Indianapolis
Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne
Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis, Indianapolis
Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana, Munster
Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley, South Bend
Next Generation Holocaust Survivors, Indianapolis
Purdue University Jewish Studies Program
Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity, Indianapolis
Sinai Temple, Michigan City
StandWithUs Midwest
Temple Adath B'nai Israel, Evansville
Temple Beth-El, South Bend
Temple Israel, Valparaiso
United Hebrew Congregation, Terre Haute
Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, Indianapolis