

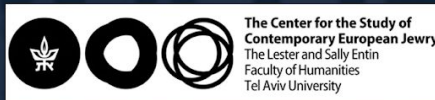
# THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION IN THE POST-OCTOBER 7 WORLD:

## TRENDS AND CASE STUDIES

BY THE COMBAT ANTISEMITISM MOVEMENT (CAM) AND THE CENTER FOR THE  
STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN JEWRY AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY



COMBAT  
ANTISEMITISM  
MOVEMENT



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# A | Executive Summary

As antisemitism surges globally following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, broadening institutional support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is critical for a unified understanding of, and strategies to combat, contemporary Jew-hatred. While the definition is non-legally binding, its implementation in legislation can help governments and institutions combat antisemitic discrimination.

## Key points include:

- **Antisemitism After October 7:** The Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) recorded 3,534 antisemitic incidents between January 1, 2024 and July 31, 2024, 15.5% more than the 3,059 recorded in all of 2023. These shocking findings stem directly from the global surge in antisemitism in the aftermath of October 7.

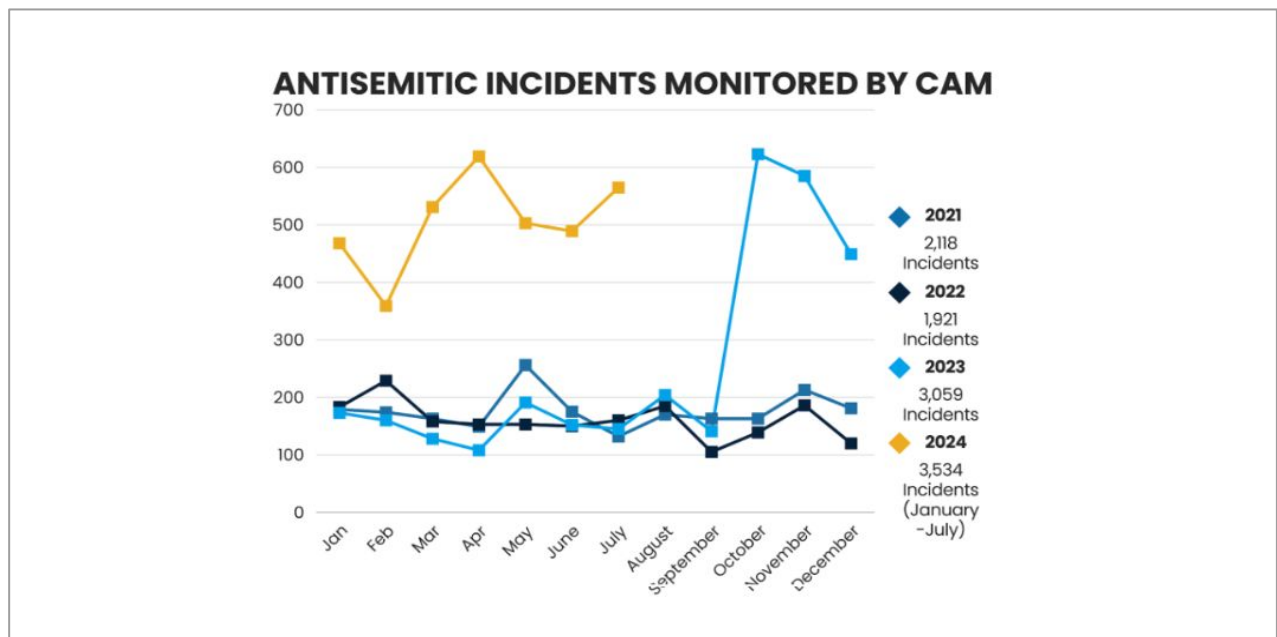


Photo Credit: CAM ARC

- **New Forms of Antisemitism:** Denial or justification of the October 7 atrocities – in which Hamas murdered approximately 1,200 people in Israel, kidnapped innocent civilians, and committed horrific sexual violence – along with the amplification of other forms of antisemitism, highlights the evolving nature of antisemitism in today’s world.
- **Total Adoptions:** As of July 1, 2024, 1,242 entities worldwide have adopted or endorsed the IHRA antisemitism definition.
- **CAM and Tel Aviv University 2024 Documentation (January 1 - July 1):**
  - 21 new IHRA antisemitism definition adoptions and endorsements.
  - 5 previous adoptions or endorsements retroactively recorded in 2024.
- **Institutional Support:**
  - **Symbolic and Legislative:** Support for the definition ranges from endorsements to legislative initiatives incorporating the IHRA definition in anti-discrimination policies.
  - **U.S. State Legislation:** South Dakota, South Carolina, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida advanced or implemented IHRA antisemitism definition-based anti-discrimination laws so far in 2024.
- **Urgent Call to Action:**
  - **Government entities** should incorporate the IHRA definition legislatively to combat antisemitism effectively.
  - **Non-governmental entities** such as corporations should adopt the IHRA definition as a framework for their corporate policies, ensuring they do not inadvertently support or enable antisemitic behavior.
  - **Universities**, particularly those facing antisemitic incidents, should adopt the IHRA definition in their codes of conduct and enforce repercussions for discrimination.

## B | Introduction

### **The mass murder perpetrated by Hamas in Israel on October 7, 2023, triggered a global surge in antisemitism.**

Since then, Jewish communities worldwide have faced a torrent of intimidation, harassment, bullying, vandalism, and acts of physical violence. On college campuses, pro-Palestinian groups and their supporters have fostered hostile environments for Jewish and pro-Israel students with pro-Hamas rhetoric and encampments that [exclude](#) “Zionists” and their Jewish supporters. According to the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, these acts are manifestations of the world’s oldest hatred.



Photo Credit: Aviva Klompas / X ([Source](#))

Adopted by IHRA in 2016, the Working Definition of Antisemitism is crucial for understanding modern antisemitism, particularly when anti-Israel sentiment becomes antisemitic. This definition helps delineate and combat evolving forms of antisemitism, including hatred of the Jewish state and denial of the Jewish people’s right to self-determination.

Recent security threats facing the Jewish people globally underscore the IHRA definition’s importance. In April, antisemitic activity on North American college campuses spiked as anti-Israel activists erected protest encampments, where demonstrators chanted pro-Hamas slogans and endorsed violence against Jews. Synagogues worldwide have also faced relentless attacks, including vandalism, arson, and verbal and physical assaults against congregants.

In the face of these challenges, institutions continue to endorse or adopt the IHRA antisemitism definition, reflecting its broad acceptance and legitimacy. As of July 1,



2024, a total of 1,242 entities globally have adopted or endorsed the definition. The 1,242 entities include national and local governments, NGOs, universities, athletic clubs, and corporations.

Furthermore, 1,242 worldwide adoptions or endorsements marks an increase from 1,216 as of January 1, 2024. This increase of 26 total recorded IHRA antisemitism definition adoptions and endorsements consists of 21 so far in 2024 and five from previous years that CAM recorded during the first six months of 2024.

**The 1,242 entities worldwide that have adopted or endorsed the definition include:**

- 45 countries (including 25 out of 27 EU member states)
- 533 non-federal government entities
- 347 educational institutions
- 258 public organizations
- 58 private organizations

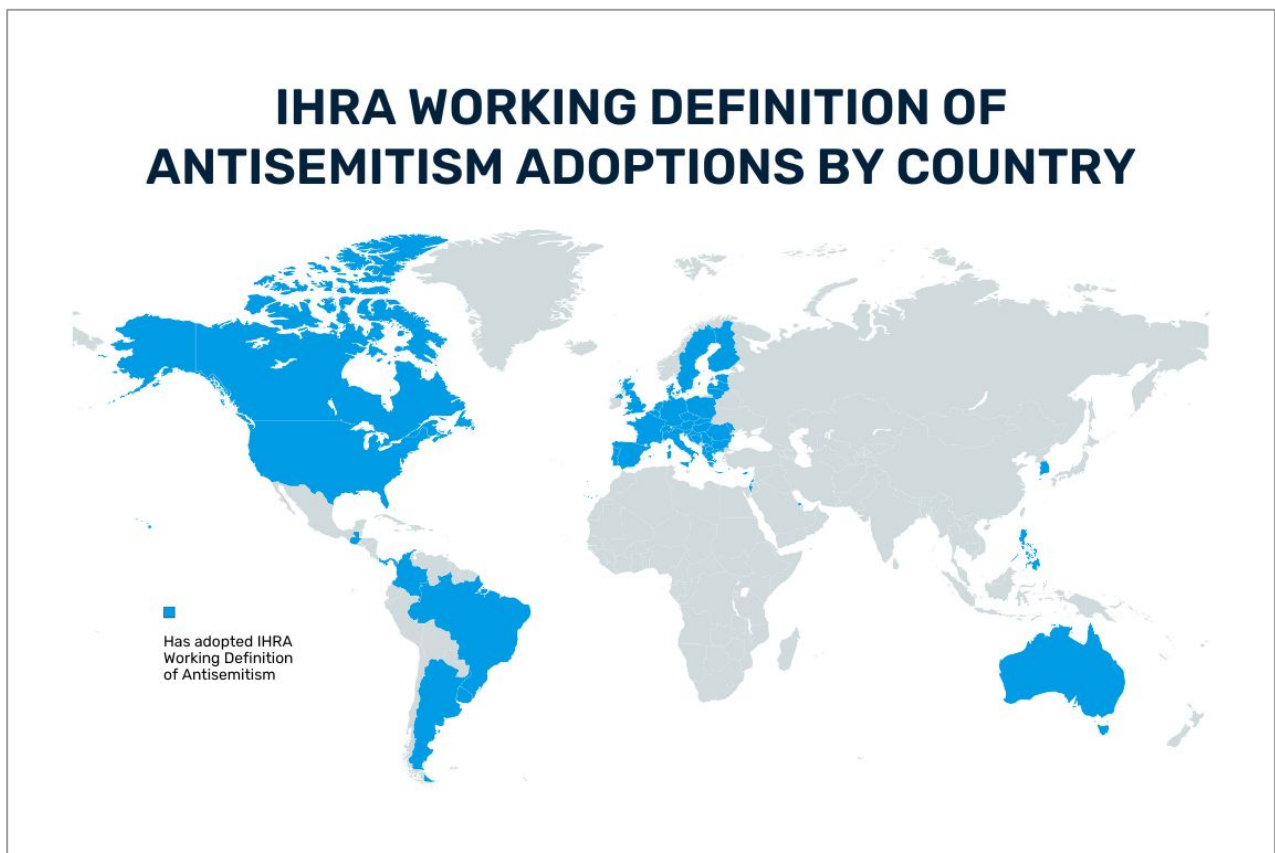


Photo Credit: CAM/Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University

271 of the 533 non-federal government adoptions occurred in the UK, with 132 in the U.S., including 95 localities and 37 states, representing nearly three-quarters of U.S. states. 56 non-federal government entities have adopted the working definition in Argentina, and 20 in Canada, including 8 out of 10 Canadian provinces, and 14 in Italy. There have been 9 German and 8 French adoptions of the working definition. Brazil has a total of 6 IHRA adoptions, including 4 out of its 26 states. Both Australia and Poland have 5 non-federal government adoptions, while Spain has 4 and Venezuela has 3.

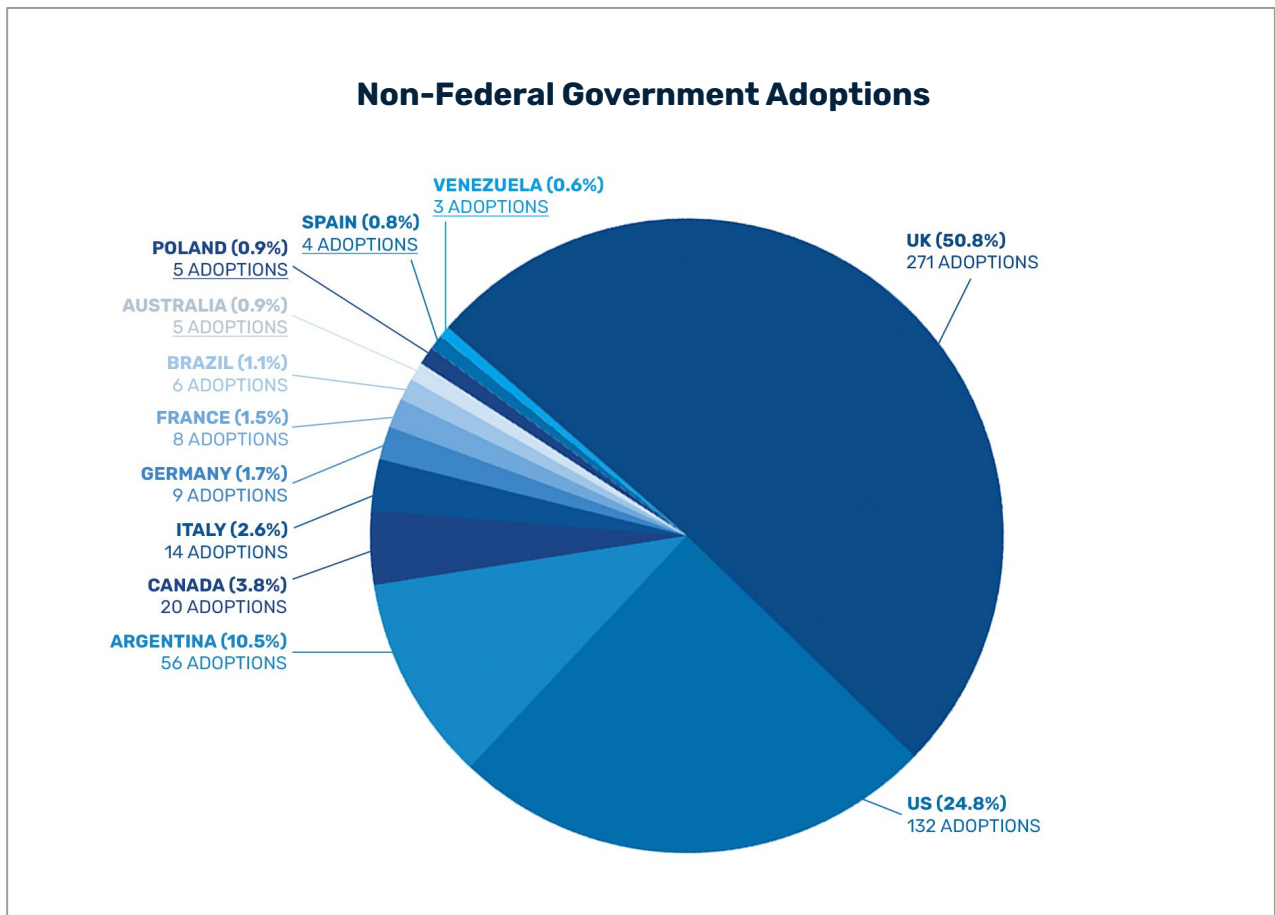


Photo Credit: CAM/Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University

- 17 of the adoptions or endorsements in the first half of 2024 included three new U.S. states (Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina), four Brazilian states (Rio de Janeiro, Roraima, São Paulo, Goiás), nine cities (Barcelona, Spain; Wrocław, Poland; Brescia, Italy; West Orange, New Jersey; Rye, New York; Ossining, New York; Crema, Italy; North Salem, New York), and one federal court (Federal Court of Criminal Cassation, Argentina).

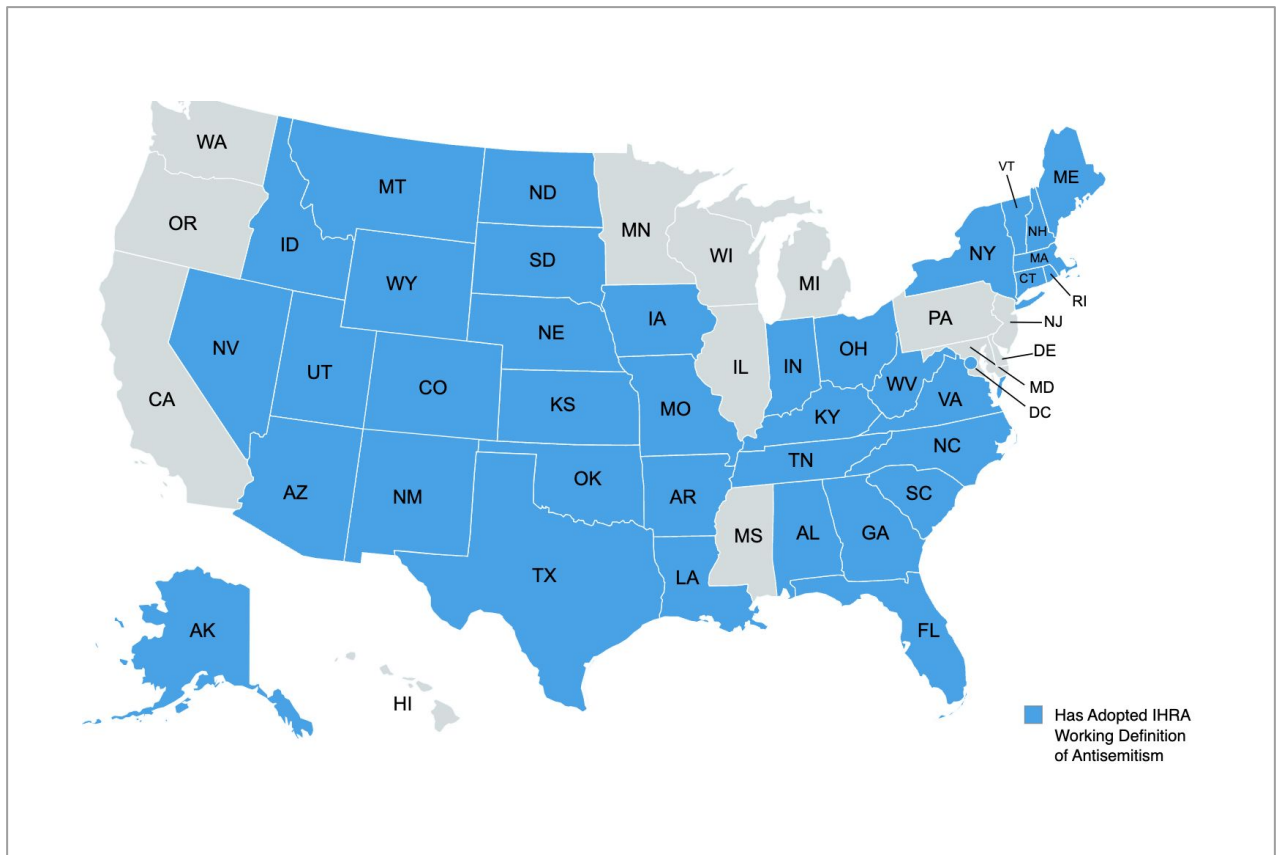


Photo Credit: CAM/Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University

- Four of the adoptions or endorsements in the first half of 2024 were from public organizations and entities: the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region, Temple Beth Israel Pomona, Muslim American Leadership Alliance (MALA), and Counter Extremism Project.



## C | Policy Case Studies

### **Institutional support for the IHRA antisemitism definition predominantly takes two forms: symbolic endorsements and implementation through legislation and public policy.**

The former, while a necessary first step, is insufficient to advance the cause of combating antisemitism with impact. Legislation and public policy initiatives must instruct those charged with investigating, stamping out, and enacting consequences for potential cases of anti-Jewish discrimination to consider the IHRA definition when attempting to discern the perpetrator's intent. Recent such examples include the Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA), the State Department's Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism, and the incorporation of the IHRA definition into legislation in Florida, South Carolina, and South Dakota, discussed in greater detail later in this report.

In addition, some universities, such as The Ohio State University and institutions in the Texas university system, have adopted the definition into their codes of conduct following gubernatorial executive orders.

In several cases, a strong correlation exists between institutional implementation of the IHRA definition and forthright responses to antisemitism. This report examines several such recent cases at the international, national, state, local, and campus levels. The report also outlines select examples of commendable legislation incorporating the IHRA definition into anti-discrimination efforts, examines states mired in debate about legislation on the definition, and addresses prominent falsehoods about IHRA definition legislation.

### Positive Developments

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#### Changes to German Citizenship Law

In late June, Germany [enacted](#) legislation that requires naturalization applicants to indicate support for Israel's right to exist. The Interior Ministry framed the law as a *"response to increasing antisemitism in Germany."* German lawmakers' willingness to implement these legal changes likely stems from reliance on the IHRA working definition, which Germany [adopted](#) in 2017, and has since championed. The definition specifies that antisemitism might include, depending on context, *"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."* Accordingly, attempting to ensure that new citizens do not harbor hatred for the Jewish state is a logical approach to combating antisemitism, especially after October 7. Since Hamas' attack, roughly half of the antisemitic incidents that the German antisemitism watchdog RIAS [recorded](#) in Germany involved anti-Israel activism.

#### Anti-Israel Protests in Germany

In addition to its commitment to the IHRA definition, Germany also [prohibits](#) displaying certain symbols, such as those of Nazism or terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah. German law also prohibits celebrating criminal acts such as the October 7 attack and [allows](#) certain authorities to bar protests that imperil others' safety.

Germany appears to have applied these rules as early as October, when Berlin city officials [banned](#) a planned anti-Israel demonstration because it risked *"seditious, antisemitic exclamations, glorification of violence, conveying a willingness to use violence and thereby intimidation, as well violent activities."* The city of Hamburg enacted similar bans, and on October 12, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a ban on the organization Samidoun because its followers celebrated Hamas' October 7 attack.

A staunch willingness to tackle antisemitism and enforce laws prohibiting violence and support for terrorism appears to flow downstream from Germany's embrace of the IHRA definition.

## France

In the immediate aftermath of Hamas' October 7 attack, the French authorities exhibited a sense of urgency to stifle activity that might incite violence against the Jewish community or glamorize terrorism.

On October 12, 2023, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin [relied](#) to police that *"Pro-Palestinian demonstrations must be prohibited because they are likely to generate disturbances to the public order,"* urged police to protect synagogues and Jewish schools, and pledged to expel foreigners who commit antisemitic acts. Although a French high court later [clarified](#) that overarching bans on pro-Palestinian demonstrations are illegitimate, it ruled that case-by-case bans are valid and that protests that *"support Hamas ... are of a nature to provoke disturbances to public order."*

In late 2019, the French National Assembly [adopted](#) the IHRA definition, which lists *"Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion"* as a contemporary example of anti-Jewish hatred. Accordingly, it is unsurprising that French authorities recognize support for Hamas as a manifestation of antisemitism and moved quickly to impede it after Hamas' attack.

## Brazil

The four Brazilian states that adopted the IHRA definition this year encompass nearly 70 million people, or approximately one-third of the country. These achievements build on earlier city-level IHRA definition adoptions, including [Rio de Janeiro](#) and São Paulo in November 2023. As a democracy and the most populous country in South America, Brazil's several IHRA adoptions serve as examples to others on the continent.

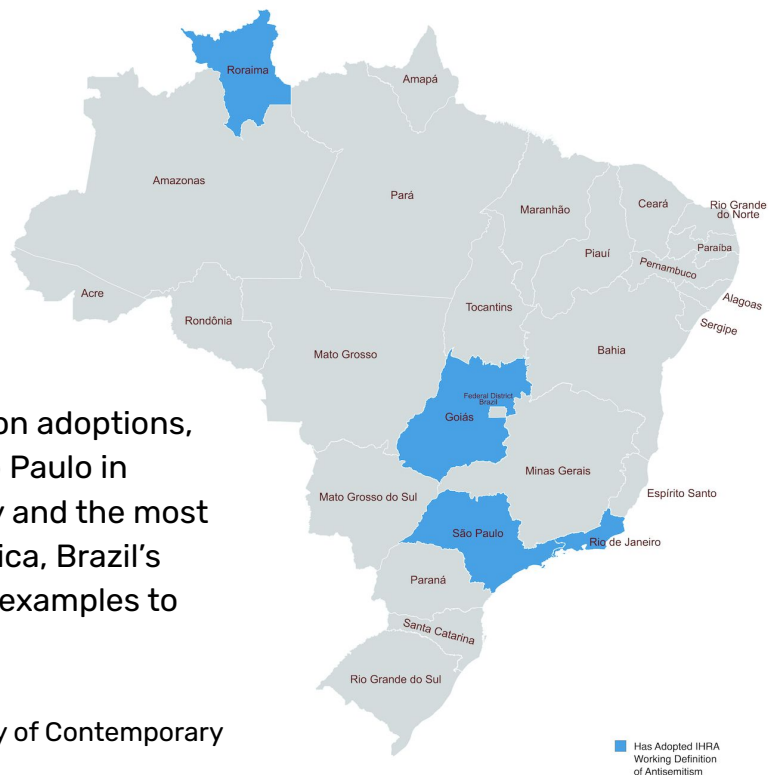


Photo Credit: CAM/Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University

Despite these positive steps, antisemitism disguised as criticism of Israel persists in Brazil. The president of Brazil himself, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, recently made statements about Israel that almost certainly qualify as antisemitic per the IHRA definition. He [asserted](#) in February that “what is happening in the Gaza Strip with the Palestinian people hasn’t happened at any other moment in history” except “when Hitler decided to kill the Jews.”

## Negative Developments

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### Berlin Withdraws Anti-Discrimination Measures

Developments this year in Berlin underscore the importance of a proper understanding of IHRA definition-related policies and free speech. In early January, Berlin’s Senator for Culture Joe Chialo introduced a measure that would [obligate](#) artists to commit to combating antisemitism as defined by the IHRA definition to continue receiving public funding. Subsequently, over 4,000 artists signed an open letter that said, “*The planned clause makes it easier for administration and politicians to use this leverage and to narrow the space for necessary discourses.*” Later that month, Chialo [announced](#) a suspension of the clause.

The letter’s authors seemingly believe that governments should be obligated to fund art projects irrespective of the ideas and values that the projects promote. However, governments exercise discretion in their spending, and a decision not to provide funds for particular projects does not constitute a restriction of free speech. Presumably, artists promoting content defined as antisemitic per the IHRA definition would still be allowed to do so (assuming it complies with other relevant local laws), but not necessarily with government funding. Unfortunately, failure to understand this seems to have quashed an important initiative to protect Germany’s Jewish community.

### Antisemitism Awareness Act

New York Congressman Mike Lawler introduced the Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA), or H. R. 6090, on October 26, 2023 in the wake of the atrocities of October 7. Congressman Lawler [addressed](#) the importance of the legislation, saying:



*“The amount of antisemitism we consistently see on college campuses is disturbing and unacceptable... The [AAA] is a strong step in the right direction on this front, providing the Department of Education with a clear definition of antisemitism in order to combat this scourge on college campuses.”*

Photo Credit: CAM ([Source](#))

The U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) the bill on May 1, 2024 in a 320-91 vote, underscoring bipartisan support for the act. The bill is currently awaiting a vote in the Senate. The bill [stipulates](#):

In reviewing, investigating, or deciding whether there has been a violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.) on the basis of race, color, or national origin, based on an individual’s actual or perceived shared Jewish ancestry or Jewish ethnic characteristics, the Department of Education shall take into consideration the [IHRA definition] as part of the Department’s assessment of whether the practice was motivated by antisemitic intent.

The AAA resembles an executive order [issued](#) by the Trump Administration on December 11, 2019, which declared, *“In enforcing Title VI [of the Civil Rights Act], and identifying evidence of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, all executive departments and agencies (agencies) charged with enforcing Title VI shall consider”* the IHRA definition and its contemporary examples of antisemitism.

Less than one month later, a Jewish student at Columbia University [alleged](#) in a complaint to the Department of Education that the university’s administration did not attempt to mitigate the known “hostile environment” on campus, underscoring the extent to which integrating the IHRA definition into anti-discrimination laws can serve as an effective tool to hold university administrators accountable for antisemitic discrimination on their campuses.

## Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism

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On July 17, 2024, the U.S. State Department [published](#) its “Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism” after adopting its principles in Buenos Aires, Argentina, at an event [commemorating](#) the 30th anniversary of the AMIA terrorist attack that Hezbollah perpetrated in collaboration with Iran<sup>1</sup>. Endorsed by representatives of 36 countries and four international organizations, the document urges the use of the IHRA definition globally:

In order to combat antisemitism, governments need tools to understand its various manifestations. The legally non-binding [IHRA definition] is an important internationally recognized instrument used by over 40 U.N. member states ... In addition, hundreds of sub-national public authorities, universities, sports bodies, NGOs, and corporations rely on it.

The State Department’s renewed efforts to garner global support for the IHRA definition as a matter of U.S. foreign policy are commendable and increase the likelihood that additional countries and jurisdictions will follow suit.

<sup>1</sup>Although this report examines (and the data on IHRA working definition adoptions covers) developments from January 1, 2024 to July 1, 2024, adoption of the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism marks important progress worth highlighting.



## City-Level

### Seattle: Falling Short on Hate Crimes

On June 18, 2024, a vandal [scrawled](#) the words “Genocide in Gaza” on a picture of a child Holocaust survivor in the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle. Local police argued that the act was not a hate crime but “*a non-criminal bias incident motivated by political ideology.*” The police department elaborated, “*The motivation for the graffiti was anger over the policy and practice of the Israeli government.*”

However, the individual chose to express his or her “anger” toward Israel by *purposely targeting* a Jewish institution and Holocaust Museum. The IHRA definition notes that “*Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel*” could constitute antisemitism, as well as “*Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*” As representatives of several Holocaust museums across the United States [argued](#) in a joint statement addressing the incident, “*Holding Jews – much less a Holocaust museum – responsible for the wartime actions of a foreign government is unacceptable and straightforwardly antisemitic.*”

Notably, a hate crime in Seattle “usually involves ... property damage,” [according to](#) the Seattle Police Department, rendering it even more puzzling that the police chose to classify the vandalism as a non-criminal incident. Graffiti [does not appear](#)



Photo Credit: CAM/X ([Source](#))

to be legal in Seattle. If police and prosecutors in Seattle had considered the IHRA definition while investigating this crime, perhaps they would have reached a different conclusion.

## State-Level

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In the first half of 2024, South Dakota, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas enacted or advanced legislation or executive orders that implement the IHRA definition.

### South Dakota



The bill signing ceremony at the State Capitol in Pierre, South Dakota, March 6, 2024.  
Photo Credit: South Dakota Governor's Office ([Source](#))

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem [signed](#) HB 1076 in March 2024, which [says](#), “*In reviewing, investigating, or deciding whether an alleged violation of this chapter is antisemitic, the Division of Human Rights must consider the [IHRA] definition of antisemitism ... including the contemporary examples of antisemitism identified therein.*”

Addressing the bill's importance, Governor Noem [said](#), *"Ever since the horrific terrorist attacks on the State of Israel on October 7th, 2023, we have seen a shocking spike in antisemitic acts of hatred around the world ... I am very proud to sign this historic bill to keep our Jewish people secure,"* indicating a strong understanding that hatred of Israel is frequently a manifestation of contemporary antisemitism. HB 1076 built on South Dakota's earlier, non-legally binding endorsement of the IHRA definition in a December 2021 [executive proclamation](#).

## South Carolina

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster, too, [signed](#) a [bill](#) (H. 4042) into law in May 2024 that implements the IHRA definition in anti-discrimination law, using nearly identical language to that of South Dakota's HB 1076. McMaster said, *"Following the brutal terrorist attacks on Israel, we have seen an alarming rise in antisemitism not only around the world but shockingly on many of our nation's college campuses and on the streets of many large cities."*



Photo Credit: South Carolina Governor's Office ([Source](#))

The South Carolina State Legislature had previously adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in June 2018. For fiscal year 2018-2019, [H. 4950](#) included a [provision](#) that South Carolina schools and universities apply the definition *"When reviewing, investigating, or deciding whether there has been a violation of a college or university policy prohibiting discriminatory practices on the basis of religion."* The [2019-2020](#) and [2020-2021](#) budgets similarly contained IHRA provisions, but they and H. 4950 expired after the fiscal years concluded. Accordingly, H. 4042 fulfilled



the state's need for legislation that implements the IHRA definition independent of annual budgetary allocation.

## North Carolina

On July 1, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper [signed](#) the SHALOM, or Standing Up To Hate And Leading With Our Moral Principles, Act, which [adopts](#) the IHRA definition *"as a tool and guide for training, education, recognizing, and combating antisemitic hate crimes or discrimination and for tracking and reporting antisemitic incidents to this State."* The governor rightly said, *"Defining antisemitism is important to stopping it, and this new law helps do that as antisemitic incidents are on the rise. While we protect the right to free speech, this legislation helps to make our state a more welcoming, inclusive and safe place for everyone."*

## New Hampshire

New Hampshire's Senate followed suit and passed a similar [bill](#) in late May mandating that:

...the relevant authorities charged with enforcing the relevant anti-discrimination statutes shall take into consideration the [IHRA] definition of antisemitism as part of the assessment of whether the alleged unlawful [discriminatory] conduct or practice was motivated by antisemitic intent.

New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu [signed](#) the bill in early August. This followed Governor Sununu's [Executive Proclamation](#) endorsing the IHRA working definition in 2020.

## Georgia

In late January, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp [signed](#) HB 30, which [defines](#) antisemitism in accordance with the IHRA definition and stipulates:

All state departments and agencies shall consider antisemitism as evidence of discriminatory intent for any law or policy in this State which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin or provides for enhanced criminal penalties for criminal offenses when the defendant intentionally selected any victim or group of victims or any property as the object of the offense because of such victim's or group of victims' actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin.

The governor [said](#), *“There has been a troubling rise in antisemitism ... especially following the horrific terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7.”* He noted that Jews *“have experienced hate in the form of antisemitic flyers spread across neighborhoods, messages on social media calling for the death of Jews in Israel and around the world and even hateful gatherings outside synagogues.”*



Photo Credit: Georgia Governor's Office ([Source](#))

## Florida

Florida's leaders have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to protecting the state's large Jewish community. In May 2019, the Florida legislature passed and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law [HB 741](#), which added "religion" as a protected class in the state system of public education. The legislation cited the tenets of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, mandating that anti-Jewish discrimination in K-20 educational institutions be treated identically to racial discrimination.

An example of this in the public education system took place on October 24, 2023, when Governor DeSantis and Chancellor Ray Rodrigues [deactivated](#) student

chapters of SJP at public colleges and universities. The two leaders argued that National SJP's "tool kit" insisting "students in exile are PART of" Hamas' attack constituted illegal material support for terrorism. Furthermore, when students constructed an encampment at the University of Florida in April, President Ben Sasse quickly ordered campus police to [arrest](#) the trespassers. As he explained in a *May Wall Street Journal* [op-ed](#):

"We will always defend your rights to free speech and assembly - but if you cross the line on clearly prohibited activities, you will be thrown off campus and suspended ... We said it. We meant it. We enforced it ... We're a university, not a daycare."

More recently in late June, Governor DeSantis signed [HB 187](#), which adopts and further implements the IHRA definition "*to assist in the monitoring and reporting of antisemitic hate crimes and discrimination and to make residents aware of and to combat such incidents in this state.*" While previous IHRA legislation had only been used to investigate antisemitism in Florida educational institutions, as of July 1, 2024, Florida law enforcement agencies now utilize the IHRA definition to determine whether an act of vandalism or violence constitutes a hate crime.

The [same day](#), the governor signed [HB 1109](#) to "*establish a program to provide funds to make full-time Jewish day schools and preschools in the state secure with professional security hardening,*" suggesting that politicians who embrace the IHRA definition are more likely to display a sense of urgency to protect the Jewish community.

## **Texas**

A March executive order from Texas Governor Greg Abbott represents a unique attempt to tackle antisemitism on college campuses. Signed on March 27, 2024 in response to an increase in campus antisemitism, Executive Order GA 44 [specifies](#) that according to state law, "*students should not participate in, and higher education institutions should not allow, expression that is unlawful or disrupts the operations of the institution,*" and "*antisemitism and the harassment of Jewish students have no place on Texas university campuses and will not be tolerated...*"



The Order obligates higher education institutions in Texas to “review and update free speech policies to address the sharp rise in antisemitic speech and acts on university campuses and establish appropriate punishments...” Most importantly, the Order calls on higher education institutions in the state to “include the [IHRA] definition ... in university free speech policies.”

In the subsequent months, several university administrations in Texas asked law enforcement to remove encampments orchestrated by anti-Israel activists groups, including at [University of Texas \(UT\), Arlington](#), [University of Houston](#), [UT, Austin](#), and [UT, Dallas](#), most commonly for violating trespassing laws and university policies prohibiting camping. Moving to dismantle the encampments so soon after Governor Abbott’s executive order suggests that the order invigorated a sense of urgency among university administrations to stifle antisemitic activity on campus.

Governor Abbott and the Texas State Legislature previously embraced the IHRA definition in June 2021, passing [H.B. 3257](#) with bipartisan support. The law established the Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Board and empowered it to examine antisemitism in the state as defined by the IHRA definition.

## Indiana

Unlike the aforementioned states, others are mired in continuous debates that impede legislative progress in fighting antisemitism. Indiana is one such state. In March 2024, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb [vetoed](#) a bill to define antisemitism in state education law because “*The language that emerged in the final days of the legislative session fails to incorporate the entire [IHRA] definition and its important*



*contemporary examples.”* In early March, state senators removed the IHRA’s name from the bill and excluded the definition’s examples amid fear from the bill’s detractors that the definition inhibits criticism of Israel. The governor instead [signed](#) a proclamation endorsing the entire definition on March 18.

Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb signs an executive proclamation reiterating his state's support for the entire IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, March 18, 2024.

Photo Credit: Indiana Governor’s Office ([Source](#))

Opponents of coupling the IHRA definition with legislation frequently argue that such laws will chill First Amendment-protected criticism of Israel, but this is incorrect. IHRA legislation aims to combat *discriminatory activity or hate crimes*, not speech. In fact, lawmakers usually specify in such bills that nothing in the document should restrict First Amendment-protected activity. Discrimination is not protected speech.

## **New Jersey**

New Jersey lawmakers and stakeholders are navigating similar debates. In June 2024, a committee in the state's senate [voted](#) to adopt bill [S1292](#), which, like several comparable laws, impels the state to consider the IHRA definition when investigating potential antisemitic discrimination. (Currently, the bill awaits a vote by the full State Senate.) Despite the focus on anti-discrimination legislation, one opponent of the bill falsely [argued](#) that *"If these bills were adopted, we would be punished for expressing our outrage [toward Israel]."*

The bill became so contentious that in May, the New Jersey State Senate [canceled](#) a planned vote on the legislation due to safety concerns, highlighting the importance of promoting accurate information about the definition to quell hyperbolic reactions fueled by falsehoods.

### **Leaders of universities whose codes of conduct include the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism have displayed a remarkable willingness to enforce policies forbidding encampments and other disruptive antics of demonstrators who promote antisemitic activities on campus.**

As of July 1, 2024, 347 educational institutions globally have adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. The United Kingdom boasts the largest share of university adoptions with 254. The United States has the second-most educational adoptions by colleges, universities, and school boards, with a total of 52. All but two of the 254 UK adoptions were actions by university administrations, while 32 out of 52 U.S. adoptions were non-binding motions passed by student-run undergraduate legislatures.

Several case studies suggest an immense difference between campuses that have either not adopted the IHRA definition, or have done so in a non-actionable way, and universities that have. Specifically, several schools whose codes of conduct incorporate the IHRA definition have fostered relatively less hostile environments for the Jewish community. The same holds true within states whose governments have adopted strong legislation on this issue.

## **Positive Developments**

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### **Vanderbilt University**

The state of Tennessee boasts strong IHRA legislation, almost certainly setting the stage for the Vanderbilt administration's firm responses to antisemitic agitation. Tennessee, like Florida, implemented the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism for its education system in a bill that Governor Bill Lee signed on May 25, 2022. Tennessee [Code § 49-7-181](#) requires state government entities and institutions of higher education to apply the IHRA definition when considering claims of antisemitic discrimination.

Accordingly, the Vanderbilt University administration's [response](#) to vandalism,

violence, and antisemitism stands as a shining example to other universities. When activists and instigators seized an administrative building on March 26, authorities cleared them out the next morning. Such decisive action stands in stark contrast to the delayed responses at other elite universities, such as [Harvard University](#).

Vanderbilt responded to the illegal occupation of a university building in one day, but Harvard took over three weeks to clear its encampment. Some Vanderbilt students were arrested for violating laws, and students who participated in the illegal occupation of a Vanderbilt building were immediately expelled. By contrast, Harvard suspended students when the encampment was evicted, only to later [backtrack](#) and reinstate them.



Photo Credit: World Socialist Web Site ([Source](#))

Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier subjected adult students to the same standards and code of conduct enforcements that all other students on campus live by, rather than [coddling](#) them or helping to ensure their [release](#). When students advocated a campus-wide BDS referendum, imperiling the school's right to enter contracts with public entities in Tennessee per the state's [Code Ann. § 12-4-119](#), administrators did not indulge the demands.

## Universities in Virginia

Virginia, too, has exhibited a strong top-down approach to combating antisemitism. On May 8, 2023, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin signed a bill that [establishes](#) the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism *“as a tool and guide to identify instances of antisemitism and train first responders, educators, and other public servants how to respond to antisemitism and prevent hate crimes from happening.”* Governor Youngkin argued, *“When we clearly define hatred ... we can transform for the good and build a better future.”*



Photo Credit: UVA SJP/Instagram ([Source](#))



Almost a year later, Governor Youngkin [insisted](#), in reference to anti-Israel demonstrations and encampments on university campuses, *“We’re not going to have encampments and tents put up and yes, we will protect the ability to peacefully express yourself, but we’re not going to have the kind of hate speech and intimidation we’re seeing across the country in Virginia.”*



Photo Credit: UVA SJP/Instagram ([Source](#))

On April 27, 2024, 12 agitators were [arrested](#) and charged with trespassing at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg. That same weekend, 82 people, 53 of whom were students, were [arrested](#) at Virginia Tech, whose President Tim Sands said, *“[Free speech] rights do not extend beyond the point where they interfere with the rights of others, violate our policies, the Code of Virginia, or federal laws and/or create a threat to safety for others.”* On May 4, 2024, police [arrested](#) 25 trespassers at the University of Virginia’s encampment.

## Duke University

Duke University’s Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Misconduct, a section of the university’s code of conduct, [cites](#) the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. Duke represents a rare case of an American university administration adopting the IHRA definition and ensuring that it is enforceable.

Notably, students [had not established](#) an encampment on Duke’s campus as of late April, by which time dozens had appeared across the United States and Canada. Including the IHRA definition in the university’s code of conduct may have deterred behavior that fosters exclusionary environments toward Jews while building a campus culture of inclusivity.

Others have noted Duke’s relative lack of campus strife and hostility toward the Jewish community. One journalist [noted](#) in mid-May that according to Jewish

students at Duke, the calmer environment is an outgrowth of “a student body that shies away from political activism [and] an administration responsive to Jewish students’ concerns about antisemitism...” Indeed, the university’s president, Vincent Price, [said](#) soon after Hamas’ October 7 attack, “As with discrimination and hatred of all kinds, [antisemitism] must be rejected and countered by an abiding embrace of our common humanity. Violence is never the answer, nor will it ever be a path to peace.”

Months earlier, a study published in December 2023 and conducted by a team of Brandeis University researchers [found](#) that Duke was among the schools with the



lowest reported quartile of antisemitism. One researcher argued that “there are some things about these campuses, about what the administration and faculty do, that makes them safer places for Jewish students than others.”

Photo Credit: Duke SJP/Instagram ([Source](#))

## University of Pittsburgh

The University of Pittsburgh [adopted](#) the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in its nondiscriminatory policy in 2022 after a professor absurdly compared face masks to Nazis’ gassing of Jews at Auschwitz. Adopting the IHRA definition undoubtedly sent a strong message that antisemitism would not be tolerated on campus. The university administration’s quick responses to anti-Israel encampments on campus demonstrate this. “Pitt Divest from Apartheid” [dismantled](#) its on-campus encampment on April 30, merely one week after its construction and following an [agreement](#) with campus police to move the demonstration to a nearby park.



Photo Credit: David Rullo/Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle ([Source](#))



In early June, another group not affiliated with the university constructed an encampment on campus and, [according to](#) Chancellor Joan Gabel, vandalized buildings with antisemitic graffiti, threw a weapon through a window, and placed *“materials in the revolving doorway nearest the encampment with what appeared to be the intent to ignite those materials.”* Commendably, the Chancellor clarified that *“we have no illusions that the efforts of this group last night are directed toward free expression”* and argued that *“what we saw last night, and continue to see, are attempts to destroy property ... as well as accompanying action that in no way elevates open inquiry or allows for peaceful advocacy.”* The agitators [dispersed](#) following discussions with police, just two days after constructing the encampment.

## The Ohio State University

On April 14, 2022, Governor Mike DeWine of Ohio issued [Executive Order 2022-06D](#), titled “Defining and Combating Antisemitism.” The order impelled *“all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions, including all public colleges and universities to adopt the ... IHRA definition.”* Subsequently, the Ohio State University (OSU) incorporated the definition in its Office of Institutional Equity. The university administration [specified](#) that the adoption flowed directly from the governor's executive order.



Photo Credit: SJP OSU /Instagram ([Source](#))

On April 25, 2024, more than 300 activists, many of whom were not OSU students, [attempted](#) to establish an anti-Israel encampment on campus grounds. Administrators responded decisively, ordering law enforcement to arrest the agitators and charge them with criminal trespassing less than five hours after the encampment attempt

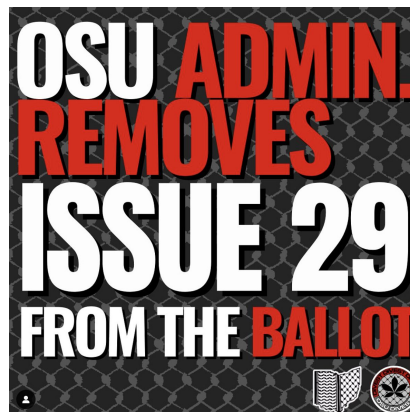


Photo Credit: SJP OSU/Instagram ([Source](#))

began. Leadership from elected officials empowered university leaders to not cover when confronted with a crisis.

## Negative Developments

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### University of Pennsylvania

By contrast, the post-October 7 environment at the University of Pennsylvania – whose [code of conduct](#) does not incorporate the IHRA definition – has been abysmal. (The state of Pennsylvania has also not endorsed or adopted the IHRA definition.)

According to Eyal Yakoby, a senior at the university, protesters in the on-campus encampment [waved](#) a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) flag, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. Yakoby also said that protesters yelled, “Al-Qassam [Brigades], make us proud, kill another soldier now,” a reference to Hamas combatants. Indeed, Yakoby and another student filed a lawsuit against the administration on the grounds that the school was “an incubation lab for virulent anti-Jewish hatred, harassment, and discrimination.”

In its “Campus Antisemitism Report Card,” the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) [determined](#) that the University of Pennsylvania deserves a “D” grade, denoting a “deficient approach” to combating Jew-hatred. Before her resignation following a [disastrous](#) Congressional testimony during which she, Harvard’s, and MIT’s



Photo Credit: NY Post ([Source](#))

presidents failed to affirm whether calls for the genocide of Jews would violate the university’s code of conduct, then-university President Liz Magill instituted an antisemitism task force. The task force’s May 20 [report](#), however, merely argued that the IHRA working definition is one of three useful definitions of antisemitism, thus squandering an opportunity to integrate it into anti-discrimination policies at the school.

### Harvard University

With a [grade](#) of “F,” Harvard – whose [student handbook](#) also does not integrate the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism – fared even worse in the ADL’s report card. The organization noted that the school’s Palestine Solidarity Committee and

Harvard Graduate Students 4 Palestine organizations blamed Israel for Hamas' October 7 attack in a joint statement that said, "*we ... hold the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.*" Since then, anti-Israel protesters have disrupted classes, a vandal wrote "kidnap the Zionists" on posters of hostages held by Hamas, and an anti-Israel group composed of university faculty even shared an antisemitic cartoon.

A group of Jewish students at Harvard filed a lawsuit, [claiming](#), "*Mobs of pro-Hamas students and faculty have marched by the hundreds through Harvard's campus, shouting vile antisemitic slogans and calling for death to Jews and Israel*" while occupying "*buildings, classrooms, libraries, student lounges, plazas, and study halls, often for days or weeks at a time, promoting violence against Jews.*"



Photo Credit: Rick Friedman/Polaris - Newscom ([Source](#))

In Harvard's own antisemitism task force's June 24 [preliminary recommendations](#), the IHRA definition is not mentioned even once. Institutions cannot combat undefined phenomena, and Harvard's failure thus far to adopt a crucial tool in the fight against antisemitism increases the chances that a toxic environment will persist.

## D | Policy Recommendations

To ensure IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism adoptions and endorsements are not just symbolic but powerful tools in the fight against antisemitism, governments, institutions, and businesses must integrate the definition into actionable policies and legislation. These efforts must focus on the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, the protection of Jewish communities, and the promotion of a zero-tolerance stance against all forms of antisemitism.

The following policy recommendations outline how different sectors – from international bodies to local governments and educational institutions – can leverage the IHRA definition to create meaningful change and foster environments that are safe, inclusive, and free from antisemitic hate.

## **United Nations**

Too many UN institutions and employees exhibit antisemitic behaviors, which underscores the need for a clear, enforceable policy based on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. The UN should adopt and implement the IHRA definition across all its bodies to ensure a consistent and robust approach to combating antisemitism within its ranks and in its global initiatives.

## **Antisemitism Awareness Act (AAA)**

If the U.S. Senate approves the AAA and it becomes law following a presidential signature, federal bodies must hold institutions accountable when the Department of Education finds them negligent in addressing antisemitic discrimination. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, any federally-funded university that allows antisemitic discrimination should be required to take corrective action or face consequences.

## **K-20 Legislation**

CAM has been working with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to draft model K-20 legislation that incorporates the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. This model legislation is designed to be passed across states, strengthening anti-discrimination laws at the educational level. State governments must adopt this model legislation to ensure that antisemitism is treated with the same severity as other forms of discrimination, particularly within public K-20 educational institutions.

## **State Governments**

States such as South Dakota, Florida, New Hampshire, and South Carolina serve as models by enacting legislation supporting the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism after initially endorsing it. Other states should follow this approach, linking the definition directly to hate crime and anti-discrimination laws. State governments must ensure that their anti-discrimination legislation prohibits all forms of anti-Jewish discrimination, including within educational institutions.



## **Cities**

City governments and public institutions should tie the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism to local ordinances aimed at countering hate crimes, ensuring that actions targeting Jewish institutions and individuals under the guise of anti-Israel protests are recognized and prosecuted as antisemitic hate crimes.

## **Businesses and Corporate Institutions**

Corporations must also recognize their role in combating antisemitism. For instance, Adidas faced backlash for its collaborations with Bella Hadid and Kanye West, who have made statements echoing anti-Zionist and classical forms of antisemitism. Businesses should adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism as a framework for their corporate policies, ensuring they do not inadvertently support or enable antisemitic behavior. By integrating the IHRA definition, companies can better navigate partnerships and campaigns, preventing the promotion of antisemitism.

## **Universities**

Universities should integrate the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism into their codes of conduct, as Duke University and the University of Pittsburgh have in the United States. College administrators must ensure Jewish students are protected and their educational rights upheld. Clear leadership is essential, particularly in the face of groups like SJP that promote discriminatory actions under the guise of anti-Zionism. Any student groups that attempt to ostracize Jews should face disciplinary measures according to university policies.

## E | Conclusion

The first half of 2024 has seen a troubling decrease in new adoptions and endorsements of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism compared to the same period in 2023. This decline is particularly concerning given the alarming rise in antisemitism worldwide following October 7th. Despite the urgency of the situation, the momentum behind adopting and implementing the IHRA definition appears to have slowed.

While many institutions have embraced the IHRA definition, there remains a significant gap between adoption and meaningful implementation. Without proactive measures to incorporate the definition into anti-discrimination policies, educational curricula, and legal frameworks, its potential to combat antisemitism effectively is severely limited.

The reluctance to implement the IHRA definition, coupled with fewer new adoptions, suggests a lack of commitment from some decision-makers to confront the growing threat of Jew-hatred. Furthermore, legal systems must be equipped to prosecute antisemitic crimes based on the IHRA definition, providing a clear deterrent against hate crimes.

The fight against antisemitism requires more than symbolic gestures; it demands concrete actions. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a vital tool in this effort, but it can only fulfill its purpose if it is fully embraced and operationalized by governments, institutions, and organizations worldwide.

## F | Appendix

### **IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism's 11 contemporary examples:**

- 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 about 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 a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it 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.

## Resources

For additional resources about how you can help push for an entity to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, or to simply learn more, [visit here](#).

## Reporting

All entities that adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism are invited to report adoptions to the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) via email at [info@combatantisemitism.org](mailto:info@combatantisemitism.org) to be included in future data.

## Full Data

The full set of global adoption and endorsement data is [available here](#).

## Disclaimer

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