

September 15, 2026

Re: Incorporation of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism into the U.S. Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities

Dear Coalition Organizers,

We write as members of the Jewish Mayors and Municipal Leaders Association (JMMLA) regarding the proposed relaunch of the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination as the U.S. Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. We write to express our grave concern with the exclusion of antisemitism in your action plan. This must be remedied.

The Coalition has the potential to provide an important national framework for municipal leadership against racism, discrimination, and hate. Of course, we support that mission. However, we are deeply concerned that the proposed 10-Point Action Plan does not explicitly address antisemitism or provide cities with the recognized definitional framework for identifying and confronting it.

At a time when Jewish communities across the world continue to face antisemitism, intimidation, and threats, antisemitism cannot simply be presumed to fall within broader language concerning religious discrimination. A coalition committed to confronting hate cannot leave antisemitism implicit.

Antisemitism is not solely a form of religious intolerance. While item (4) of the Plan appropriately protects “freedom of worship and the right to practice a faith or hold beliefs free from intimidation or harm,” that protection alone does not fully address the way antisemitism manifests today. Jews are often targeted not because of how they worship, but because of their ethnicity, ancestry, peoplehood, or the Jewish people’s ancestral connection to the Land of Israel.

This distinction is particularly important because the proposed framework strongly protects freedom of expression and encourages cities to engage in global diplomacy. Municipal leaders therefore need a clear and recognized standard for distinguishing legitimate political expression from antisemitic harassment, intimidation, or discrimination. The IHRA Working Definition provides that standard while making clear that criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country is not antisemitic.

We therefore urge the Coalition to revise the final Action Plan to:

1. Explicitly identify antisemitism among the forms of hate and discrimination participating cities commit to combating; and

2. Incorporate the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, including its 11 contemporary examples, as a practical framework to help municipal leaders recognize and respond to antisemitism.

The IHRA definition strengthens the Coalition’s broader commitment to fighting racism and discrimination by ensuring that antisemitism is addressed with the clarity it requires.

As mayors and municipal leaders, we are most often the first officials called upon when antisemitism appears in schools, public meetings, demonstrations, government institutions, or on the streets of our cities. Municipal leaders need both a clear commitment and practical tools to respond.

We respectfully but unequivocally urge that these changes be incorporated into the final 10-Point Action Plan before the Coalition’s September 21, 2026 relaunch.

Sincerely,

U.S. Members of the Jewish Mayors and Municipal Leaders Association (JMMLA)

27 SIGNATORIES

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