



Press Release



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Jewish Community Applauds Ontario's Adoption of IHRA Definition of Antisemitism



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TORONTO, ON – Today, the Government of Ontario became the first province in Canada to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, as endorsed by consensus at the 2016 IHRA plenary.

The IHRA definition is the product of decades of research, study and deliberation by many of the world's foremost experts and was accordingly adopted by consensus by the governments of more than 30 countries in 2016. The European Union and the United Nations both support it, as do governments across the globe representing every political stripe.

The IHRA definition is strongly supported by the Jewish community in Ontario, its institutions and organizations. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), B'nai Brith Canada, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC), and JSpace Canada applauded the announcement.

Quotes:

"Today the Government of Ontario joins a growing number of jurisdictions, at all levels of government and around the world, in taking action against the growing threat posed to our society by antisemitism. Antisemitism cannot be effectively addressed without being properly defined. The IHRA definition is the internationally accepted guideline for identifying anti-Jewish hate, having been adopted by dozens of countries and other institutions, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union."

"The IHRA definition provides a framework that can help guide Ontario government institutions interested in understanding contemporary forms of antisemitism, such as Holocaust denial. - **Shimon Koffler Fogel, President and CEO, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).**

"At a time of rising antisemitism in Ontario, Canada, and around the world, the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition, including its illustrative examples, is a major step forward. From high schools and university campuses to police hate-crime units, this announcement promises much-needed relief for Jews across the province."

"Ontario will now be equipped to identify and react to incidents of antisemitism in a clear and precise way, and be better positioned to prevent antisemitism and react to it whenever it rears its head anywhere in the province. We applaud the Ontario government for becoming the first province in Canada to adopt the IHRA definition." - **Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada.**

"We applaud the Government of Ontario for joining the dozens of other governments around the world in adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, a vital tool in the ongoing fight against hatred and discrimination targeting the Jewish community in Ontario. Jews continue to be subjected to vile rhetoric and propaganda and still remain the minority group most targeted by hate crime, which is nothing less than an affront to our basic democratic values as Ontarians.

"By making clear what antisemitism is and looks like, the IHRA definition will allow civil society and government to work together more effectively in our shared goal of eliminating hatred in our province." - **Michael Levitt, President and CEO, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC).**

"Our community is blessed with many diverse voices and opinions, but there is clear consensus about the need to combat the alarming rise of antisemitism. We cannot protect our society from the scourge of antisemitism if we are unable to name it, to identify it properly, and to address it consistently. By adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the Government of Ontario has demonstrated a commitment to implementing human rights and anti-racist policies.

"The IHRA definition of antisemitism has been given broad acceptance by Jewish communities around the world. Ontario is following the anti-oppression norm that victimized groups can best define the terms that describe discrimination against them"
- **Karen Mock, President, JSpace Canada.**

Additional Background

- The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental organization devoted to combatting antisemitism and promoting Holocaust education, remembrance and research. Canada has been an IHRA member since 2009 and served as Chair between March 2013 and February 2014.
- [Order in Council 1450/2020](#)
- [The complete working definition of antisemitism adopted by the IHRA plenary in 2016](#)
- Canada [adopted IHRA's working definition of antisemitism on June 25, 2019](#), as part of its anti-racism strategy.
- [Hate-Crime Analysis by Statistics Canada Highlights Urgent Need to Combat Antisemitism](#)
- [CIJA Policy Brief: Defining Antisemitism and the IHRA definition](#)

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federations of Canada-UJA

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