

On 26 May 2016, the Plenary in Bucharest decided to:

**Adopt the following non-legally binding 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.”**

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, 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.

*No Comment necessary, except to point out that this should work both ways. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Palestinians in the name of a radical ideology (Zionism) or an extremist view of religion (Extreme Orthodox Judaism), should be equally abhorrent.*

- 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.

*The problem here is the phrase 'of Jews as collective'. This is vague. Had it been '**the** Jews as **a** collective' there would be no problem. As it is, who defines the collective. If, for example, major newspapers are owned by Jews and demonstrate a pro-Israel bias, is it 'antisemitic' to draw attention to those facts?*

- 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.

*By contrast with the previous bullet point this one is **not** vague. No problem here.*

- 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).

*There is a relatively minor difficulty here which I'll cover under the next (5<sup>th</sup>) bullet*

- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

*I'm taking bullet points 4 and 5 together because they deal with the same subject, historical truth. Taken together the clauses could have the effect of limiting genuine historical research. Denying the 'fact' is clearly wrong, but some aspects of the 'mechanisms' (**not** the example given - gas chambers) might be open to question. But the real problem is with 'scope' and 'intentionality'. There are genuine questions here, where questioning may be construed, (will be by some) as 'denial'. Let me provide an example.*

*In his major work, 'The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich', William Shirer asks (p.978) 'How many Jews did it (the "final solution") massacre? The figure has been debated. ... The figure given in the Nuremberg indictment was 5,700,000 ... Reitlinger ... concluded that the figure was somewhat less - between 4,194,200 and 4,581,200.'*

*I have seen Reitlinger's revised figures and they are between 4.2 and 4.7 million. It may be that future research will establish a figure either lower or higher. But, if I point out that the probable figure is 1.5 million lower than the one usually claimed, am I guilty of 'Accusing the Jews .. of ... exaggerating' and thus of antisemitism? Were the figure to be eventually 'proved' as 'only 1 million' that would in no way diminish the crime or the responsibility.*

- 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.

*But what if they are? For instance, [Arnon Milchan](#). It is highly likely, given Israel's government stance and the financial support it receives that some Jewish citizens of e.g US and UK could justifiably be so accused. But, according to IHRA it is antisemitic in this case to tell the truth!*

- 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.

*The issue here is that the example given does not quite fit the clause it claims to exemplify. That first clause in itself is controversial because the Jewish claim to self-determination in Israel denies a similar right to Palestinians. That clause actually contradicts the example, and that the state of Israel is essentially racist can be*

*demonstrated. Again, telling truth becomes antisemitic.*

- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

*This is a 'catch-all' that is often used to dampen criticism. At least three questions: How is this to be judged and by whom? How is 'democratic' defined and, again, by whom? Must I, when criticising Israel, also criticize every other nation's behaviour, especially that of so-called 'democracies'?*

- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.

*Again there is here a difficulty of definition. It assumes that 'classic antisemitism' has been adequately defined. (Arguably, if it has been satisfactorily defined, no further definition is necessary).*

- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

*What if those comparisons are accurate, should they not be drawn, or is Israel a 'special case'?*

- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

*I agree that this is racist and therefore antisemitic, but must point out that Israel regularly holds all Palestinians accountable, and punishes them in numbers, for the actions - real or imagined - of a few.*

(Definition taken from <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism> on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018)