
Human rights organizations in Israel urge UN not to promote IHRA definition of antisemitism

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“As human rights organizations based in Israel, striving to promote and protect the rights of all people in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, we regret and reject the increasing pressure on the United Nations to adopt and apply the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

As also argued before by the [UN Special Rapporteur on Racism](#), [128 leading scholars of antisemitism](#) and related fields and [104 international civil society organizations](#), the IHRA definition is deliberately weaponized to frame legitimate criticisms of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians as antisemitism and should not be endorsed and used by the UN.

The Israeli government views and treats the IHRA definition as a coercive tactic and tool to silence dissent to its repressive policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians. It does so to delegitimize and discourage peaceful opposition to its entrenching occupation and annexation of Palestine.

This political context is completely ignored by the organizations now pressuring the UN to endorse the IHRA definition in the context of its upcoming *Action Plan on monitoring antisemitism and enhancing a system-wide response*. Some of these organizations play a leading role in the instrumentalization of the IHRA definition.

Testifying to the political agenda behind its instrumentalization, Jewish activists and Israeli human rights organizations are now also being targeted by allegations of antisemitism invoking the IHRA definition. This includes NGOs signing this statement.

However, the negative impact of the IHRA definition extends beyond human rights work in relation to Israel and Palestine. It also undermines the fight against antisemitism, by devaluating the meaning of antisemitism and by distracting from the real and imminent threats to the safety and well-being of Jews throughout the world. In fact, as already noted, the IHRA definition is also weaponized to attack Jews.

In its recent strategy on antisemitism, the US government attributes minimal importance to the IHRA definition. Instead, the strategy focuses on actions. We welcome this prioritization and commitment.

Against this background, we call on the UN not to validate and promote the IHRA definition in any way in its upcoming *Action Plan on monitoring antisemitism and enhancing a system-wide response*.

We wholeheartedly welcome the UN’s commitment to countering antisemitism and all forms of racism and intolerance, as repeatedly reaffirmed by UN Secretary-General Guterres and High Representative Moratinos. And we stand ready to assist the UN in any efforts in this regard consistent with and supportive of human rights.”

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