

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Item No 7

Report by: Doug Flight **Job title:** Head of Strategic Policy

Date: 9 October 2018

Contact Officer: Doug Flight

Telephone: 020 7934 9805 **Email:** doug.flight@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Summary:

This report provides background information on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

The Secretary of State of Communities and Local Government wrote to Leaders of Councils in December 2017, encouraging the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the working examples.

We are aware of 18 London Boroughs that have adopted the IHRA definition since December 2017.

Recommendations: Leaders' Committee is asked to:

1. Commend consideration of the following, by those London local authorities that have not already done so:
 - a. adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, including the agreed working examples.
 - b. inclusion of the IHRA definition and working examples within individual councils' constitutions and codes of conduct for members and officers.
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IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Background

1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance brings together governments and experts to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance.
2. The IHRA, which was formerly known as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research was initiated in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson. The IHRA's membership includes of 31 member countries, including the United Kingdom.
3. The IHRA supports policymakers and educational institutions and briefs government officials and NGOs active in global initiatives for genocide prevention.
4. The United Kingdom has been member of the IHRA since it was founded in 1998, the current head of the UK delegation is Lord Eric Pickles. The delegation consists of representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, academia, voluntary sector including the London Jewish Cultural Centre.
5. On 26 May 2016 in Bucharest, the Plenary of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted a 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.”

6. The IHRA has published examples to guide organisations on the implementation of the definition, these are set out in **Appendix A** and are considered to be essential supporting elements of working definition.
7. In December 2016, the Prime Minister announced the Government's intention to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and in January 2017, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, the then Secretary of State for

Communities and Local Government wrote to Council Leaders encouraging them to adopt this definition of antisemitism (**Appendix C**).

8. Subsequently, 18 London councils and the Mayor of London have adopted resolutions on antisemitism by approving council resolutions on the subject. A model resolution prepared by the IHRA is attached as **Appendix B**.

Conclusion

9. Leaders' Committee is asked to consider commending consideration of the following, by those London local authorities that have not already done so:
 - a. adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, including the agreed working examples.
 - b. inclusion of the IHRA definition and working examples within individual councils' constitutions and codes of conduct for members and officers.

10. It is envisaged that the IHRA and other relevant bodies with an interest on tackling anti-Semitism would be advised of the decision of Leaders Committee.

Financial implications for London Councils:

None

Legal implications for London Councils:

None

Equalities implications for London Councils:

The recommendation directly addresses equalities issues though seeking to deepen the understanding of antisemitism.

Attachments:

Appendix A: IHRA examples to guide organisations

Appendix B: Model resolution prepared by the IHRA

Appendix C: Letter from the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, encouraging Council Leaders encouraging to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism.

Appendix A: IHRA examples to guide organisations

The IHRA has published examples to guide organisations on the implementation of the definition. The Alliance has pointed to the following examples which 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 levelled 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.

The IHRA advises that 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.
- 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 endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour 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.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

Draft motion for councils to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism

This council expresses alarm at the rise in antisemitism in recent years across the UK. This includes incidents when criticism of Israel has been expressed using antisemitic tropes. Criticism of Israel can be legitimate, but not if it employs the tropes and imagery of antisemitism.

We therefore welcome the UK Government’s announcement on December 11th 2016 that it will sign up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines on antisemitism which define antisemitism thus:

“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.”

The guidelines highlight manifestations of antisemitism as including:

- 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 endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour 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.”

This Council welcomes the cross-party support within the Council for combating antisemitism in all its manifestations. This Council hereby adopts the above definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and pledges to combat this pernicious form of racism.



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Local Authority Leaders

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local
Government*

***Department for Communities and Local
Government***

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 3450

Fax: 0303 444 3289

E-Mail: sajid.javid@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dclg

30 January 2017

Dear Leader,

Adoption of the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism

In December 2016, the Government formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism; the first European Union country to do so.

The definition, although legally non-binding, is an important tool for public bodies to understand how anti-Semitism manifests itself in the 21st century, as it gives examples of the kind of behaviours which depending on the circumstances could constitute anti-Semitism. The full text of the definition can be found at:

https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf

We are well aware that anti-Semitism continues to be a problem in this country. It is therefore right that, as a Government, we are able to demonstrate the seriousness with which we take it, as for all forms of hate crime. Anti-Semitism must be understood for what it is – an attack on the identity of people who live, contribute and are valued in our society. In light of this, I would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage you to formally adopt the definition and consider its application in your own authority.

THE RT HON SAJID JAVID MP