

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations, New York

H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos
High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations
United Nations, New York

May 17, 2023

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned Jewish communities and organizations, civil society organizations, and scholars and practitioners from around the world, write to you regarding the “UN Action Plan on monitoring antisemitism and enhancing a system-wide response” that Under Secretary-General Moratinos is presently finalizing in his capacity as the UN’s senior focal point on antisemitism since 2020.

We greatly appreciate your consistent recognition that global antisemitism is an insidious danger that harms Jewish individuals and communities, and the broader societies in which we live. We welcome your commitment to making the United Nations a more effective force for countering and combating Jew-hatred around the world.

We have long recognized that in order to combat antisemitism we must understand it. Key to these efforts is employing a clear and comprehensive definition that explains the multiple forms antisemitism may take.

It is our collective view that the non-legally binding International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is an indispensable tool to understand and fight antisemitism, and one that can be used entirely consistently with fundamental human rights standards. Indeed, any UN Action Plan must acknowledge the importance of the IHRA Working Definition to the vast majority of Jewish individuals, organizations, and communities who are the primary targets of antisemitic hatred, discrimination, and violence; are the Action Plan’s primary intended beneficiaries; and are best placed to identify manifestations of hatred and bias directed against us.

We note that the IHRA Working Definition (and its predecessor EUMC Working Definition), which was developed with the cooperation and support of Jewish communities, has provided essential guidance to governments and organizations in Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere for nearly two decades in their efforts to combat antisemitism. As the annex to this letter demonstrates, it has been adopted by more than 40 nations and multilateral organizations such as the European Union and the Organization of American States. It has earned the near-unanimous endorsement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Thirty-one US states, numerous local governments, and countless businesses, universities, and organizations around the world use it to address harm to our communities. No other definition of antisemitism has been broadly adopted and utilized by practitioners, governments, and civil society. All recognize that the IHRA definition has immense value as an educational tool that offers an evaluative framework, with clear examples of the multiple forms antisemitism can take, that empowers the victims and society at large to identify forms of antisemitism that might otherwise go unrecognized. As you are aware, former UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, also recognized the unique value of the IHRA Working Definition and explicitly recommended its use as an educational and training tool in his 2019 [report](#) and 2022 [action plan](#) on antisemitism, which he prepared following wide consultations with Jewish organizations and community leaders.

We note that the IHRA Working Definition offers succinct explanations and practical examples that can help governments and individuals at all levels of society recognize antisemitism. These include conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial, as well as the demonization of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.

It is this latter aspect of the IHRA Working Definition that has elicited concern from some civil society organizations. However, we stress that its inclusion in the IHRA Working Definition is precisely what makes this tool uniquely valuable for understanding and monitoring modern day antisemitism. Indeed, forms of antisemitism that are masked as “anti-Zionism” and that deny Jews the right to self-determination are among those most frequently encountered by many Jews today, whether or not they are Zionists. This is well-documented in surveys conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in Europe and by surveys in the United States as well. So-called “alternative definitions” that have been formulated as responses to the IHRA Working Definition do not adequately or effectively clarify this form of antisemitism and are not appropriate for inclusion in the UN Action Plan. There are few if any examples of their practical use. Thus, we believe any references to these alternative definitions would only introduce greater confusion into the UN Action Plan and undermine our common efforts to combat antisemitism.

We reiterate that, contrary to the assertions of some civil society organizations, the IHRA Working Definition explicitly affirms that criticism of Israel per se is not antisemitic. We note that many of the governments that have adopted the IHRA Working Definition and consider it a useful tool have found it entirely possible to sharply criticize Israeli policies and practices. We note, further, that the IHRA Working Definition is not legally binding and does nothing to prohibit any speech, even the most hateful.

We urge you to ensure that the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is referenced positively in the forthcoming “UN Action Plan on monitoring antisemitism and enhancing a system-wide response” as an indispensable educational and monitoring tool, the value of which has been widely recognized by many key stakeholders, and one that should be used for training UN staff, among others, on how to recognize and respond to antisemitism.

Thank you for considering our views on this matter.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Initiating Organizations

1. American Jewish Committee
2. Anti-Defamation League
3. B’nai B’rith International
4. Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations
5. European Jewish Congress
6. Jewish Federations of North America
7. World Jewish Congress

Other Global Organizations

8. Combat Antisemitism Movement
9. Commonwealth Jewish Council
10. Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC)
11. HIAS
12. National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry (NCSEJ)

13. United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
14. Women's League for Conservative Judaism
15. World Union of Jewish Students
16. Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO)

Regional organizations

Europe

1. European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ)
2. B'nai B'rith Europe
3. Conference of European Rabbis
4. European Coalition for Israel
5. European Union of Jewish Students
6. European Jewish Congress
7. Forum for Cultural Diplomacy

Latin America

8. B'nai B'rith Latin America

North America

9. Jewish Federations of North America
10. Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity

National communities and organizations (by United Nations regional group)

East European Region

Azerbaijan

11. Baku Religious Community of European Jews

Armenia

12. Jewish Community of Armenia

Belarus

13. Union of Belarusian Jewish Public Associations and Communities

Bosnia and Herzegovina

14. Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bulgaria

15. Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom"
16. Religious Community of the Jews in Bulgaria
17. Beit Shalom Jewish Educational Foundation Bulgaria
18. Tzedaka- Shalom foundation - OJB Shalom

Croatia

19. Coordination Committee of the Jewish Communities in the Republic of Croatia

Czech Republic

20. Federation of Jewish Communities in Czech Republic

Estonia

21. Jewish Community of Estonia

Georgia

22. Jewish Cultural and Education Fund

Hungary

23. Mazsihisz (Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary)

Latvia

24. Latvian Council of Jewish Communities

Lithuania

25. Jewish Community of Lithuania

Moldova

26. Jewish Community of Republic of Moldova

Montenegro

27. Jewish Community of Montenegro

North Macedonia

28. Jewish Community in the Republic of North Macedonia

Poland

29. Jewish Community of Poland

30. Lodge Polin of B'nai B'rith (B'nai B'rith Poland)

31. Jewish Association Czulent

Romania

32. B'nai B'rith Romania

Serbia

33. Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia

34. Terraforming

Slovakia

35. Federation of Jewish Communities in Slovakia

Ukraine

36. Jewish Confederation of Ukraine

37. Ukrainian Jewish Committee

Latin American and Caribbean Region

Argentina

38. Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AIMA)

39. B'nai B'rith Argentina

Bolivia

40. Circulo Israelita La Paz Bolivia

Brazil

41. B'nai B'rith Brazil

42. Confederação Israelita do Brasil (CONIB)

Chile

43. B'nai B'rith Chile

44. Comunidad Judía de Chile

Colombia

45. B'nai B'rith Colombia

Costa Rica

46. B'nai B'rith Costa Rica

47. Centro Israelita Sionista de Costa Rica

Dominican Republic

48. Centro Israelita de la República Dominicana

Ecuador

49. B'nai B'rith Ecuador

El Salvador

50. Comunidad Israelita de El Salvador

Guatemala

51. B'nai B'rith Guatemala

Honduras

52. B'nai B'rith Honduras

Mexico

53. B'nai B'rith Mexico

54. Comité Central de la Comunidad Judía de México

55. Tribuna Israelita

Panama

- 56. Comisión Antidifamación CAD B'nai B'rith (B'nai B'rith Panama)
- 57. Congreso Judío Panameño
- 58. Consejo Comunitario Hebreo de Panamá

Paraguay

- 59. Comunidad Judía del Paraguay

Peru

- 60. Asociación Judía del Perú
- 61. B'nai B'rith Peru

Uruguay

- 62. B'nai B'rith Uruguay

Venezuela

- 63. B'nai B'rith Venezuela
- 64. Confederación de Asociaciones Israelitas de Venezuela

Western European and Others (WEOG) Region

Australia

- 65. Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council
- 66. B'nai B'rith Australia and New Zealand
- 67. Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Austria

- 68. Centropa
- 69. Jewish Community Vienna (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien)

Belgium

- 70. Le Comité de Coordination des Organisations Juives de Belgique (CCOJB)
- 71. CCLJ-Belgium (Centre communautaire laïc juif David Suskind)
- 72. The International Jewish Center

Canada

- 73. Adas Yeshurun Herzlia
- 74. B'nai Brith Canada
- 75. Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)
- 76. Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada
- 77. The Abraham Global Peace Initiative

Denmark

- 78. Jewish Community of Denmark

Finland

79. Central Council of Jewish Communities in Finland

France

80. B'nai B'rith France

81. CRIF - Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France

82. Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (LICRA)

Germany

83. Amadeu Antonio Foundation

84. Central Council of Jews in Germany

85. Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (ZWST)

86. Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft e.V.

87. German Union of Jewish Students (JSUD)

88. "Jehi 'Or" Jüdisches Bildungswerk für Demokratie – gegen Antisemitismus gUG

89. Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Anti-Semitism (JFDA)

90. MAKKABI Deutschland e. V.

91. Mideast Freedom Forum Berlin

92. Service Center for Anti-Discrimination North Rhine-Westphalia (SABRA NRW)

Greece

93. WerteInitiative - Jewish-German Positions Greece

94. Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece

Ireland

95. Jewish Representative Council of Ireland

Israel

96. B'nai B'rith World Center – Jerusalem

97. Centre for Jewish Impact

98. NGO Monitor

Italy

99. B'nai B'rith Italy

100. Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI)

Liechtenstein

101. Verein Jüdische Gemeinschaft im Fürstentum Liechtenstein

Luxembourg

102. Consistoire Israelite de Luxembourg

Malta

103. Jewish Community of Malta

Netherlands

- 104. Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap (NIK) Org. Jewish Communities in the Netherlands
- 105. CIDI (Center for Information and Documentation Israel)

New Zealand

- 106. Australasian Union of Jewish Students in New Zealand
- 107. Beth Shalom Progressive Synagogue
- 108. Council of Jewish Women Aotearoa NZ
- 109. Holocaust Centre of New Zealand
- 110. Nelson Jewish Community Inc
- 111. New Zealand Community Security Group Trust
- 112. Wellington Jewish Community Centre
- 113. Wellington Progressive Jewish Congregation
- 114. Zionist Federation of New Zealand

Norway

- 115. Det Mosaiske Trossamfunn - Jewish Community Oslo

Other

- 116. Gibraltar Jewish Community

Portugal

- 117. Jewish Community of Lisbon

Spain

- 118. Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain

Sweden

- 119. Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities
- 120. Swedish Union of Jewish Youth (Judiska ungdomsförbundet i Sverige, JUS)

Switzerland

- 121. Gamaraal Foundation
- 122. Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities

Türkiye

- 123. The Jewish Community of Türkiye (Turkey)

United Kingdom

- 124. Antisemitism Policy Trust
- 125. Association of Jewish Refugees
- 126. Board of Deputies of British Jews
- 127. BICOM (Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre)
- 128. Community Security Trust
- 129. Jewish Leadership Council
- 130. London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism

United States¹

131. AMIT Children
132. AIPAC
133. Alliance for Academic Freedom
134. American Friends of Likud
135. American Zionist Movement
136. CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis)
137. Center for Righteousness and Integrity (CRINY)
138. Emunah of America
139. Endowment for Middle East Truth
140. Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
141. Indigenous Bridges
142. Jewish Studies Zionist Network
143. MERCAZ USA
144. NA'AMAT USA
145. North Carolina Coalition for Israel
146. ORT America
147. Rabbinical Assembly
148. Rabbinical Council of America
149. Religious Zionists of America – Mizrachi
150. Shields of David
151. Stop BDS on Campus
152. Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus
153. Telluride Jewish Community
154. Temple Sinai
155. Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
156. United Teacher Los Angeles (UTLA) Educators Caucus for Israel
157. Zioness Movement
158. ZOA

African Region

South Africa

159. South African Jewish Board of Deputies

Asia-Pacific Region

Japan

160. Jewish Community of Japan

Myanmar

161. Myanmar Jewish Community

Academics and Practitioners

¹ This section does not list the U.S.-based organizations that are referenced above as “Initiating Organizations.”

Academics²

1. Dr. Steven Albert, University of Pittsburgh
2. Dr. Uzi Baram
3. Katherine Barbieri, University of South Carolina, Department of Political Science
4. Philip Barnett, City University of New York
5. Volker Beck, Lehrbeauftragter/Associate Lecturer Centrum für Religionswissenschaftliche Studien CERES Ruhr-Universität Bochum
6. Dr. Ulrike Becker, Middle East Freedom Forum, Berlin
7. Deidre Berger, Tikvah Institut gUG
8. Darrell Bock
9. Geoffrey Braswell, UCSD Department of Anthropology
10. Professor Bruce Bukiet
11. Dr. Ellen Cannon, Professor of Political Science and Jewish Studies, ISGAP
12. Paul Cantz, PsyD, ABPP
13. Professor Daniel Chernilo, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Chile
14. Perry Dane, Rutgers Law School
15. Morton M. Denn, Albert Einstein Professor Emeritus, City College of New York
16. Donna Robinson Divine, Morningstar Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Government, Emerita, Smith College
17. Stanley Dubinsky, University of South Carolina
18. Dr. Tanja Ehmann, KHSB-Berlin
19. Miriam F. Elman, Syracuse University
20. Irina Esterlis, Yale University
21. Dr. Ayal Feinberg, Gratz College
22. Terri Susan Fine, University of Central Florida
23. Luis Fleischman, Palm Beach State College
24. Dr. Matthew Flisfeder, The University of Winnipeg
25. Steven Fraade, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, Yale University
26. Professor Rosa Freedman, University of Reading
27. Ben M. Freeman
28. Anna Geifman, Bar Ilan University
29. Dr Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias Institute of Law Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences
30. Dr. Avraham Goldstein, The City University of New York (CUNY)
31. David Graizbord, University of Arizona
32. Dr. Susan Greenberg, Honorary Research Fellow, University of Roehampton
33. Haskel Greenfield, Distinguished Professor, University of Manitoba
34. Marc Grimm, Deputy Professor for the Didactic of Social Science at Wuppertal University
35. Jaime Grinberg, Montclair State University
36. Professor Oren Gross, Irving Younger Professor of Law, University of Minnesota Law School
37. Gary D. Grossman, University of Georgia
38. Amber Gum, PhD
39. David Halahmy, History Department Chair, Cypress College
40. Jaroslava Halper. University of Georgia
41. Linda Haramati, Yale School of Medicine
42. Kent D. Harber, Rutgers University at Newark

² Individuals listed have signed in a personal capacity; institutional affiliations are provided solely for identification.

43. Professor Bernard Harrison, Chair Emeritus, University of Utah, University of Sussex
44. Allan Havis, University of California San Diego
45. Professor Jeffrey Herf, Distinguished University Professor, Emeritus, Department of History, University of Maryland, College Park
46. Professor David Hirsh, Academic Director and CEO of the London Centre for the Study of Antisemitism and Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London
47. Dr. Dahn Hiuni
48. Morten Hunke, CEFR Journal - Research and Practice, Anna-Lindh-Schule, Berlin
49. Gunther Jikeli, Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Indiana University
50. Alex Kamenev, University of Minnesota
51. Ellen W. Kaplan, Professor Emeritus, Smith College
52. Jonathan Katz, University of Maryland
53. Marc Katz, Scripps College, Claremont Colleges Consortium
54. William Katz, University of Texas at Dallas
55. Steven G. Kellman, University of Texas at San Antonio
56. Lesley Klaff, Sheffield Hallam University, Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism
57. Cary Kogan, University of Ottawa
58. Marvin Koss, Upstate Medical University
59. Joël Kotek, Université Libre de Bruxelles
60. Dr. Matthias Kuntzel
61. Joseph Kushick
62. Norma Landau, University of California Davis
63. Armin Lange, Professor for Antisemitism Studies, University of Vienna, and Second Temple Judaism
64. Professor Ruth Langer, Boston College
65. David Leffell, Yale University
66. Diana Levin
67. Dr. Marian Levy, University of Memphis
68. Professor Joe Lockard, Arizona State University, English Department
69. Professor Doron Lubinsky
70. Dr. Lee Lukoff, Adjunct Professor, American University
71. Dyanne Martin, Wheaton College
72. Graeme Mason, Yale University
73. James Mendelsohn, University of the West of England
74. Professor Philip Mendes, Monash University
75. Professor Evan Morris, Yale University
76. Sebastien Mosbah-Natanson, Sorbonne Unviersite
77. Fred Naider, Professor Emeritus College of Staten Island, CUNY
78. Cary Nelson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
79. Serban Nichifor
80. S. Ben Niku
81. Pamela Paresky
82. David Patterson, Hillel A. Feinberg Distinguished Chair in Holocaust Studies, Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies, University of Texas at Dallas
83. Andrew Pessin
84. Steven Pinker, Harvard University
85. Professor Dina Porat, Professor Emeritus, Modern Jewish History, Tel Aviv University
86. Professor Susan Prager, Brooklyn College, CUNY

87. Daniel Prober, Yale University
88. Elke Rajal
89. Walter Reich, Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Professor of International Affairs, Ethics and Human Behavior, The George Washington University
90. Dr. Lars Rensman, University of Passau
91. Dr. Dave Rich
92. Mark Rosenbaum, Hawaii Pacific University, College of Business
93. Jonathan Rosenberg
94. Professor Alvin Rosenfeld, Indiana University, Professor of English and Jewish Studies; Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies; Director, Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
95. Richard Ross, University of Illinois
96. Elisha Russ-Fishbane, New York University
97. Michael Schmitt, University of Reading
98. Allison E. Schottenstein, Gratz College
99. Dr. Joshua Schwartz, Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar-Ilan University
100. Sheri Schwartz
101. David Schwartzer
102. Maurice Schweitzer, University of Pennsylvania
103. Michael Scrivner, Professor of English, Emeritus, Wayne State University
104. David Seidman, Northwestern University
105. Dr. Miriam Shenkar, Ohio State University
106. Dr. Gale Sigal, Wake Forest University
107. Julie Simon, Scripps College, Claremont Colleges Consortium
108. Amanda J. Smith
109. Professor Philip Spencer
110. Scott Spitzer, California State University, Fullerton
111. Izabella Tabarovsky, Fellow, London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
112. Professor Marc Tetel, Wellesley College
113. Ilan Troen, Brandeis University
114. Jefferey D. Ullman, Stanford University
115. Albert Wachtel, Professor of Creative Studies, Pitzer College
116. Professor James Wald, Hampshire College
117. Rivka Weinberg, Scripps College, Claremont Colleges Consortium
118. Michael Whine, Senior Consultant, World Jewish Congress
119. Batia Wiesenfeld
120. Malka Zeiger Simkovich, Catholic Theological Union
121. Professor Martin Zwick, Professor, Portland State University