

VILLAGE OF NORTH PALM BEACH
VILLAGE MANAGER'S OFFICE

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Village Council

FROM: Andrew D. Lukasik, Village Manager

DATE: June 24, 2021

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION** – Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism

The Village Council requested, in response to correspondence from the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Palm Beach County, that a resolution be prepared to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism as an educational tool and denouncing hate crimes against Jews and antisemitism in all forms.

Laurence Milstein, Regional Director, AJC Palm Beach County, provided the Village Council with the following information regarding the working definition:

"The Village Before the current COVID-19 pandemic, violent antisemitism was already rising in the United States. In Florida, antisemitic incidents increased 20% in 2019 compared to 2018. The largest increases were seen in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. These incidents included vandalism and antisemitic harassment. In Boca Raton, a company's Instagram account was hacked and antisemitic images were forwarded to clients, which included a synagogue. Now, during the pandemic, antisemitic conspiracy theories are increasing and spreading online.

We believe the problem is one that education and smart policy can help alleviate. Therefore, in addition to joining the USCM-AJC statement against antisemitism, we are urging cities across the country to endorse the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism as an educational tool to train educators, law enforcement agents, and civil society at large on what antisemitism is (and what it is not) and how it manifests in our society today. If we can better define it, we'll be able to more effectively fight it.

American Jewish Committee (AJC) played a vital role in the creation of this definition almost two decades ago. Today, it is the international and Jewish communities' authoritative definition of antisemitism. It has been endorsed by dozens of governments around the world, by multilateral organizations such as the European Parliament and the Organization of American States (OAS), by the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, and Education, and by the State of Florida. Closer to home, Palm Beach Gardens, Juno Beach, Jupiter Inlet Colony, Miami, Miami Beach, Doral, Miami-Dade County, and Coral Gables have all adopted the definition."

The attached Resolution has been prepared by the Village Attorney.

Recommendation:

Village Staff recommends Council consideration and approval of the attached resolution adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism

RESOLUTION 2021-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTH PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE GROWING PROBLEM OF ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICA, ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL AND DENOUNCING HATE CRIMES AGAINST JEWS AND ANTISEMITISM IN ALL ITS FORMS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Village of North Palm Beach seeks to promote an inclusive environment; and

WHEREAS, antisemitism, including harassment on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identify, affiliation or faith remains a persistent, pervasive and disturbing problem in American society; and

WHEREAS, Jews continue to be a targeted minority in the United States victimized by incidents of hate, and such incidents are increasing in an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS, the deadliest attack against the American Jewish community took place on October 27, 2018 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, killing eleven worshipers and injuring several more; and

WHEREAS, Florida has seen a twenty percent increase in antisemitic incidents in 2019, with the largest increases in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties; and

WHEREAS, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has adopted the following working definition of antisemitism, which has become the internationally recognized authoritative definition for use by governments and international organizations:

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; and

WHEREAS, 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 the following:

- Calling for, aiding or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a racial ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective – such as, 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 (such as the 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 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 the State of Israel is a racist endeavor;
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (such as claims of Jews killing Jesus) to characterize Israel or Israelis; and
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries, are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews; and

WHEREAS, antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries; and

WHEREAS, the IHRA working definition has proven to be an essential tool used to determine contemporary manifestations of antisemitism; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, the IHRA working definition is utilized by various government and law enforcement agencies in monitoring, training and education, including the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTH PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, as follows:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are ratified and are incorporated herein.

Section 2. The Village Council adopts the non-legally binding International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, including the contemporary examples.

Section 3. The Village Council hereby denounces and declares a zero tolerance for hate crimes against Jews and antisemitism in all its forms and will ensure that the IHRA working definition of antisemitism is available to Village departments and agencies responsible for addressing antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.

Section 4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2021.

(Village Seal)

MAYOR

ATTEST:

VILLAGE CLERK

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA) WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

What is the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism provides a comprehensive description of antisemitism accompanied by a set of practical examples that can be used in context to determine whether something is or is not antisemitic. These include discrimination and hatred of Jews, conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial, and antisemitism as it can relate to Israel.

Why was it created?

In the early 2000s, antisemitism resurged in Europe. Jewish leaders reported a high level of anxiety among Jewish communities and identified that attacks on Jewish targets were coming from multiple sources. In addition to the more traditional far-right, xenophobic antisemitism, a different form of antisemitism emerged in which attackers alleged that Jews were “agents of Israel” and vandalized Jewish sites in response to events in the Middle East. Neither government officials nor law enforcement labeled these aggressions as antisemitic, as though anger toward Israel somehow justified harassing Jewish worshipers or threatening Jewish schoolchildren. Official hate crimes data were also limited and most of the monitors of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) lacked any definition of antisemitism that could guide their work.

As a result, the EUMC—working in partnership with American Jewish Committee (AJC) and with the assistance of other Jewish organizations and academic experts—drafted and adopted the Working Definition of Antisemitism in March of 2005. Government authorities and civil society organizations quickly implemented the definition in their work monitoring and responding to antisemitic incidents. By way of example, the United Kingdom incorporated the definition as an essential resource in police cadet training and the U.S. Department of State utilized the definition in its first report on global antisemitism. In May 2016, IHRA, an international organization of thirty-one governments at the time, formally adopted a slightly modified version of the definition. Today, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is recognized internationally as the clear, comprehensive, and authoritative definition of antisemitism.

Why is it important?

As antisemitism rises in the U.S. and around the world, we know we cannot properly fight what we cannot define. We also know that fighting antisemitism is a societal problem and not just a burden for the Jewish community alone. AJC’s 2020 *State of Antisemitism in America* report found that 46% of Americans have either never heard the term antisemitism (21%) or have heard of it but are unsure what it means (25%), demonstrating the importance of promoting and using a standard definition of antisemitism.

How is it used?

AJC advocates for the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism as an educational tool for all those who have a responsibility to address antisemitism.

- It can help uncover a possible bias motivation behind a crime or incident and enhance the ability of police, prosecutors, and judges to respond.
- It can improve data collection of hate crimes by having a streamlined definition.
- It can help identify antisemitism when it appears in coded language that refers to Israel and help ordinary citizens to better draw the line between Israel-related antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israeli policies.
- It is a valuable guide for civil society groups, universities, social media platforms, sports organizations, and others who want to encourage civil discourse and prevent racist, antisemitic, and other intolerant actions.
- It recognizes that the perspective of the affected community is key when addressing discrimination and hatred.

Who is using it?

AJC has successfully advocated for the endorsement of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism around the world.

- Nearly thirty countries and dozens of cities and regional governments have adopted the definition.
- The European Union has issued a handbook to instruct all of its member states on proper usage of the definition.
- Scores of universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, have adopted it.
- The English Premier League employs it to instruct its players and millions of fans on how to combat racism and antisemitism.
- In the United States, it continues to inform the State Department in its global fight against antisemitism and to guide the Department of Education when carrying out its responsibility to address antisemitism on college campuses.
- A growing number of state and local governments—including the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the City of Miami—have formally adopted the Working Definition, in many cases as a result of AJC advocacy.

If you are interested in learning more about the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and AJC's advocacy efforts to promote its adoption and implementation, please visit [AJC.org/antisemitism](https://www.AJC.org/antisemitism) or email us at antisemitism@ajc.org.