

Report – Policy and Resources Committee

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition on Anti-Semitism

To be presented on Thursday, 5th December 2019

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

Both the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Leaders' Committee of London Councils have recommended that UK and London local authorities consider adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition on Anti-Semitism. The Court of Common Council is asked to consider these recommendations in light of a reported increase in anti-Semitic incidents across the UK during the first half of 2019, and the adoption of the definition by at least 19 London boroughs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Court of Common Council adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, including the agreed working examples (Appendix 1) and approve the inclusion of the IHRA definition and working examples within the Members' and Officers' Code of Conduct.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was established in 1998. The IHRA currently has 31 member countries, of which the United Kingdom is a founder member. The IHRA supports policy makers and educational institutions and briefs government officials and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in global initiatives for genocide prevention.
2. At a meeting in Bucharest in May 2016, the Plenary of the IHRA adopted a non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism: 'anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities'.

Current Position

3. In December 2016 the then-Prime Minister announced the Government's intention to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and the then-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to Council Leaders encouraging them to adopt the definition.

4. At least 19 London local authorities (most recently Ealing, in June 2019), and the Mayor of London, have since adopted resolutions on anti-Semitism in line with the IHRA definition. At a meeting of the Leaders' Committee of London Councils on 9 October 2018, its members resolved to commend to London local authorities that had not already done so to,
 - a. Adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, including the agreed working examples
 - b. Include the IHRA definition and working examples within individual councils' constitutions and codes of conduct for members and officers¹.
5. Since the recommendation by the Leaders' Committee of London Councils, the Community Safety Trust (CST), a charity established to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in the UK, has recorded 892 anti-Semitic incidents across the United Kingdom during the first six months of 2019, the highest ever total that CST has recorded during the January-June period of any year and a rise of 10% on the same period in 2018. 65% of these incidents took place in London and Greater Manchester, UK cities with the largest Jewish populations. In total, 452 incidents were reported in London, a decrease of 1% from the 459 incidents reported during the same period in 2018².

Conclusion

- 6, It is recommended that the Court of Common Council approve the changes as set out in Appendix 1.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism and Working Examples

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 17th day of October 2019.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Chair, Policy and Resources Committee

¹ [IHRA Definition of Antisemitism – Report to the Leaders' Committee – London Councils – 9 October 2018](#)

² [Community Safety Trust Antisemitic Incidents January-June 2019](#)

Appendix 1

IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism

“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.”

IHRA Working Examples

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.

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.