



FAQ

Q: How do we distinguish between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism?

A: One of IHRA's main strengths is that it allows an objective legal definition of antisemitism, as opposed to relying on "gut instinct". Whereas in the past, expressions might have been characterized as antisemitic due to the discomfort they induced, IHRA gives a clear definition of antisemitism.

Of course Israel can be subject to criticism, like any other state. Criticism, however, crosses into antisemitism when, for example, it employs classic antisemitic stereotypes, denies Israel's right to exist, or imposes double standards against Israel. For example, one can criticize Israel's policies and presence in the disputed territories, even harshly. That is certainly not antisemitic. However, denial of Israel's right to exist in any boundaries is antisemitic. Comparing Israel's policies to the Nazis is antisemitic.

Q: Why should anti-Zionism be considered antisemitism?

A: The idea of Zionism is support for the reconstitution of Jewish independence in the Jewish people's historic homeland. While one may disagree with aspects of Israel's current policies, delegitimizing Zionism is denial of the Jewish people's right to self-determination. There is no other state in the world whose very right to exist is questioned.

Let's review a few examples. Iran is a theocracy that practices discrimination against women, religious minorities and sexual minorities. Moreover, it is the biggest state sponsor of terrorism that the world has ever seen. However, does anybody argue that Iran as a country should stop existing or that the Persian people should lose their state?

Similarly, Venezuela is a failed socialist state with a history of violence. Does anybody ever say that Venezuela should stop existing and its citizens lose their independence?



Q: *How does IHRA affect free speech*

A: It shouldn't affect free speech. Different countries have different limitations on free speech and there's a balance between the damage that might arise from hate speech or incitement to violence, to the possible limitation on someone's freedom to say hateful things. The balance in the US for example is dramatically different from other countries, where free speech received an almost complete protection.

This is not meant to change that balance, and we must be extremely careful with our understanding of the proper boundaries of IHRA. As said above, criticism is allowed, it is an invaluable part of democracy.

It is only hate that we wish to stop. Justification of harm, calls for violence, dehumanizing of Jews etc.