

A GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING WHEN ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIONS BECOME ANTISEMITIC





Often, hostility toward Jews is easy to recognize. We know calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology is antisemitism. When Hamas, a U.S. and EU designated terrorist organization, calls for the killing of Jews, it is antisemitism. When Jews are attacked on American streets, it is antisemitism.

But sometimes antisemitism is not easy to recognize—especially when it involves Israel, when it’s spoken softly, when it’s peddled by celebrities, influencers, and those we trust.

Political protests are an essential part of our democracy, and criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country is perfectly acceptable. But when Jews are targeted and attacked and

Jewish institutions are vandalized to protest Israeli policies and actions, it is unacceptable. It is antisemitism.

In the immediate aftermath of the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel, antisemitic incidents surged in the United States and around the world. American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, has created this document detailing a list of examples— all taken after October 7, 2023— of when anti-Israel statements and actions can become antisemitic.

For a sector-by-sector guide for how all of society can understand, respond to, and prevent antisemitism, see AJC’s [Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America](#).

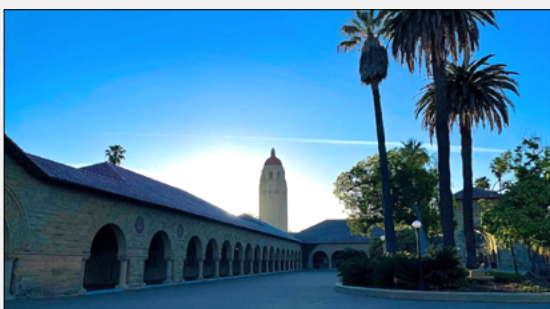


Photo Credit: berlin_mitte, Instagram.

On [October 10, 2023](#), an instructor at Stanford University in California asked Jewish students to raise their hands and then separated those students from their belongings, saying he was simulating what Israel does to Palestinians. Singling out Jews is antisemitism.



Photo Credit: zionismvictoria, Instagram.

On [October 10, 2023](#) in Melbourne, Australia a group of people were driving around and asked a pedestrian if he knew where any Jews were. When the pedestrian asked what they would do if they found any Jews, they responded, “They’ll know what we’re going to do once we’re done with them.” Then another passenger in the car said, “We’re hunting for Jews.” Melbourne’s Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre’s memorial, pictured above, [was later vandalized](#) with graffiti.

ARE YOU JEWISH?

Holding Jews accountable for Israeli actions

Holding Jews worldwide accountable for the actions of the State of Israel is antisemitic. While Israel is home to almost half of the world’s Jews, the vast majority of Jews in the diaspora are not citizens of Israel and do not have a right to vote. Blaming Jews for the government of Israel’s policies further threatens beleaguered Jewish communities.

Since the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel and subsequent war, protestors have started blaming Jewish businesses and institutions for the government of Israel’s policies as well. Protestors have boycotted or even targeted businesses and institutions as a means of voicing their contempt towards the Israeli military response in Gaza. While protestors market boycotts as a non-violent means of resistance, some have used dangerous means to organize their boycotts. Specifically, “mapping projects,” which target Jewish businesses and institutions, have appeared online and on social media platforms. By naming Jewish businesses and institutions and sometimes listing their addresses, these interactive maps doxx Jews and further endanger them.

Threats made to Jewish organizations at anti-Israel demonstration in Toronto



Photo Credit: noroomforterror, Instagram.

On [November 28, 2023](#) in Toronto, Canada a pro-Palestinian demonstrator waved a \$100 bill in the direction of a Jewish student at York University, asked if he “smelt the money,” and told the student to “go back to Israel.” Another pro-Palestinian demonstration, pictured above, later [warned](#) that “This is not just about Gaza. We tell every Zionist institution, every Zionist organization, that you will be defeated, you will be dismantled, sooner rather than later.”

GO BACK TO ISRAEL:

Dual Loyalty

[Dual loyalty](#) is a bigoted trope used to cast Jews as the “other.” It becomes antisemitic when a Jewish person is accused of being a disloyal citizen whose true allegiance is to Israel. Dual loyalty accusations also occur on college campuses when Jewish students are asked to denounce the actions of the Israeli government in order to participate in progressive activities or as a litmus test to run for student government.



Photo Credit: umme_murtazaa, Instagram.

On [November 27, 2023](#) supermodel Gigi Hadid reshared this reel on Instagram, which alleges that “Israeli authorities had harvested the organs of dead Palestinians,” giving fodder to the blood libel myth.



Photo Credit: Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI).

On [March 27, 2024](#), three women in Amsterdam, the Netherlands accosted a Jewish woman on her doorstep, calling her a “child murderer” because her daughter served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Fliers and online posts were then shared in the neighborhood, including the one featured here. These posters exposed the woman’s personal information, including her name, home and work addresses. Another flier said, “Residents beware, a child murderer lives in the neighborhood.”

ENVOKING THE BLOOD LIBEL:

Israelis kill babies, and sometimes harvest their organs

The [blood libel](#) accuses Jews of murdering non-Jewish children to use their blood for ritual purposes, such as making Passover matzah. Blood libel charges have evolved from medieval times into a widespread blame of Jews or Israelis for horrific crimes against Palestinian children, such as eating Palestinian children and drinking their blood, or purposefully targeting and killing them.

RELITIGATING DEICIDE:

Jesus was Palestinian and Jews killed him too

While blaming Jews for Jesus' death has been refuted by the Catholic Church, antisemites continue to make this charge to justify their anti-Jewish hatred. The same wrongful accusation and imagery connected with Jews as Christ killers has been adapted to fit the Middle East conflict, often in the form of Jesus representing Palestinians who are "crucified" by the Israel Defense Forces or the Israeli Government.



Photo Credit: @KimIversenShow, X (formerly known as Twitter).

On [December 24, 2023](#), political commentator Kim Iversen retweeted British Israeli writer Lee Kern's tweet denouncing Hamas. In response to the tweet, which featured a painting of Mary and Jesus, Iversen accused "the Jews" of killing Jesus.



Photo Credit: @nadia_bilbassy, X (formerly known as Twitter).

On [December 21, 2023](#), reporter Nadia Bilbassy tweeted a Palestinian artist's work featuring Jesus Christ crucified in Gaza, wearing a Palestinian flag and a keffiyeh, and surrounded by Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Regardless of this artist's intention, this depiction is dangerous; it utilizes imagery and symbolism of the deicide charge that "the Jews" killed Jesus.



Photo Credit: activistnyc, Instagram.

On [December 28, 2023](#) in New York, New York a pro-Palestinian demonstrator carried a sign that said, “Globalize the Intifada.”

CELEBRATING VIOLENCE AGAINST JEWS:

Globalize the Intifada

[“Globalize the Intifada”](#) is a phrase used by pro-Palestinian activists that calls for aggressive and violent resistance against Israel and those who support Israel. The most prominent expressions of intifada have been through violence so this phrase is often understood by those saying and hearing it as encouraging violence against Israelis, Jews, and institutions supporting Israel. While the intent of the person saying this phrase may be different, the painful impact on the Jewish community remains the same.



Photo Credit: Damien Storan, PA.

On [October 21, 2023](#) in Dublin, Ireland a pro-Palestinian demonstrator marched and carried a sign that said, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free!” There is nothing antisemitic about advocating for Palestinians to have their own state. But calling for the elimination of the Jewish state “from the river to the sea,” is antisemitic.

LOOK AT THE MAP:

“From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free”

“[From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free](#)” is a common call-to-arms for several terrorist groups and their sympathizers, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) to Hamas, which called for Israel’s destruction in its original governing charter in 1988 and was responsible for the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians, murdering over 1,200 people in the single deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust. It is also a rallying cry for pro-Palestinian activists, especially student activists on college campuses. It calls for the establishment of a State of Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, erasing the State of Israel and its people.



Photo Credit: combatantisemitism, Instagram.

On [January 3, 2024](#) the phrase, “Zionism is Racism,” was projected onto the Yankee Stadium in New York City.

ZIONISM IS RACISM:

Self-determination is a right for all people, except the Jews

Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people to reestablish a state in their ancient homeland. Jews around the world are connected to Israel whether culturally, religiously, or historically. There is nothing inherent to Zionism that contradicts support for Palestinian self-determination; indeed, many individuals who identify as Zionists support Palestinian aspirations to achieve statehood.

The phrase “[Zionism is racism](#)” is itself a racist and religious distortion that can be traced back to the Soviet Union. Basing their accusations on the notorious [Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#), the Soviet Union argued that Judaism’s concept of “the chosen people” promoted racial superiority. The link between Zionism and racism deliberately interpolates and distorts the real meaning of Judaism which explains the Jewish people are ‘chosen,’ or set apart, for special and burdensome religious and social obligations.

Those who say “Zionism is racism” convey that the Jewish people—unlike all other people in the world—do not have a right to self-determination. The phrase also denigrates Israel, home to almost half of the world’s Jews, and belittles the diversity of Jewish life in Israel.

Denying Israel’s right to exist is textbook antisemitism and is regarded as such by 85% of American Jews and 84% of the general public, according to [AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report](#).



Photo Credit: Jay L. Clendenin, Los Angeles Times.

In [October 2023](#), thousands of pro-Palestinian supporters rally in Los Angeles, California. Signs say “Zion-Nazi,” “Zionist = Terrorist,” and “Israel Made Hamas.” Blaming the victims because they are Israeli or Zionists, which is the majority of the world’s Jews, is a double standard.

HOLDING ISRAEL TO A DIFFERENT STANDARD:

The Jewish state is...different

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel and murdered 1,200 Israeli civilians yet Israel continues to receive disproportionate blame, or even sole blame, for the attacks, and the subsequent war. We can decry the loss of life in this war, but solely blaming Israel is a double standard not imposed on any other democratic country engaged in conflict.

Specifically, anti-Israel protestors omit the fact that Hamas instigated the war and deny Hamas murdered, raped, and held hostage Israeli civilians. They ignore Hamas’s use of Palestinians as human shields, its withholding of food and resources from its own people, and its indiscriminate rocket fire at Israeli civilians, which has also killed their own citizens. Some have even perpetuated the victim-blaming narrative, arguing that Israel is responsible for the formation of Hamas, and, in turn, the series of events that led to October 7, 2023. They argue October 7th is Israel’s fault. Yet, in the aftermath of terrorist attacks on other democratic countries, such as the September 11 attacks against the United States or the May 2017 Manchester Arena bombing in England, demonstrators did not attribute blame to the targeted countries nor did they accuse them of creating the terrorists/terrorist organizations.

Faulting the world’s only Jewish state is a double standard that is factually and morally wrong at best, if not antisemitic.



Photo Credit: City of Bloomington, Indiana, YouTube.

On [April 3, 2024](#) in Bloomington City, Indiana, neo-Nazis co-opted a city council meeting via Zoom and espoused racism, antisemitism, and anti-LGBTQ hate. One speaker shared antisemitic conspiracies: “Every aspect of the media is Jewish. Every aspect of the government is Jewish. Our wars are fought for Jewish interest. Our whole existence is on Jewish supremacy.”

IT'S THE JEWS' FAULT:

Spreading lies of Jewish control and power

From medieval times until the present day, [conspiracy theories](#) have spread antisemitic beliefs that blame Jews for the world's worst tragedies. Jews were accused of [poisoning wells](#) in 14th century Europe causing the Black Death and in 21st century America, they were charged with being the “hidden hand” responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. With the onset of COVID-19, Jews were accused of both spreading the virus and profiteering off of the vaccine. In the aftermath of the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel, Jews were inappropriately accused of manipulating foreign governments to increase funding for Israel's security. The conspiracy that Jews control the media, banks, and governments are part of a longstanding conspiracy of secret Jewish power.

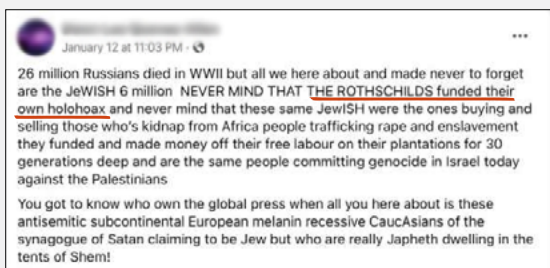


Photo Credit: Dawn Las Quevas-Allen, Facebook.

A [senior BBC schedule coordinator](#) posted several antisemitic comments and conspiracy theories on Facebook, including “NEVER FORGET THAT THE ROTHSCHILDS funded their own [holohoax](#).” The coordinator’s posts have also been widely spread in WhatsApp groups that have sprung up since the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel.



Photo Credit: @Inc.Monocle, X (formerly known as Twitter).

Anti-Israel protestors in London, England on [December 9, 2023](#), carried this sign which inappropriately and inaccurately compares the Holocaust to the Israel-Hamas war.

ISRAELIS = NAZIS:

Comparing Israeli leaders to Hitler or the Israel-Palestinian conflict to the Holocaust

Despite endless historical facts, [Holocaust denial and distortion](#) spread the false idea that Jews invented or exaggerated the Holocaust, including the diary of Anne Frank, Nazism’s intent to massacre Jews, the use of gas chambers in concentration camps, and the murder of millions of Jews. Denying the Holocaust, including denying the scope or methods used by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust, is antisemitic.

Comparing the brutality of the Nazi regime to defensive actions taken by the State of Israel is doubly offensive. Shockingly, in the same way antisemites deny the Holocaust, there are troubling numbers of people who deny the atrocities of October 7th, the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.

THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMBERANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA) 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.”



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. (See [Celebrating Violence Against Jews](#) example)
- 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. (See [Just Blame the Jews](#) example)
- 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. (See [Evoking the Blood Libel](#) and [Just Blame the Jews](#) examples)
- 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). (See [Israelis = Nazis](#) examples)
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust. (See [Holocaust Denial](#) and [Distortion](#) examples)
- 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. (See [Go Back to Israel](#) example)
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor. (See [Look at the Map](#) and [Zionism is Racism](#) examples)
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation. (See [Holding Israel to a Different Standard](#) example)
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis. (See [Evoking the Blood Libel](#) and [Relitigating Deicide](#) examples)
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis. (See [Israelis = Nazis](#) examples)
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel. (See [Are You Jewish?](#) example)