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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

August 18, 2020



Does the standard definition of anti-Semitism squelch free speech . . . or just hate speech?

Dear Friend of FLAME:

In 2016, the 31 member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) created a non-legally binding “working definition” of anti-Semitism. This definition was subsequently adopted or endorsed by several nations and many organizations worldwide, including the UK, France, Germany and Canada, and the U.S. Department of Education, as the basis for understanding the boundaries of Jew-hatred.

This definition has since become a lightning-rod for anti-Semites and anti-Zionists who have claimed it inherently stifles criticism of the State of Israel and thus, free speech.

These critics ignore the actual language of the definition, which clearly states that criticism of Israel will only be defined as anti-Semitic if it applies “double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.” In other words, if someone is singling out Israel, above other nations—using double standards, demonizing and delegitimizing it—then that would meet the criteria of anti-Semitism. Otherwise, it does not.

Firstly, it is absurd to state that any criticism of Israel’s actions constitutes anti-Semitism, because Israel is regularly criticized by decision-makers and opinion-shapers around the world every day, not least by Israeli citizens, where freedom of speech, open and free elections and the right to demonstrate are utilized frequently.

Regularly, foreign governments or international institutions release communiques and statements criticizing Israel for some action or event, and clearly the overwhelming majority are from nations that Israel has full relations with, so cannot be described as anti-Semitic.

Supporters of Israel must, nonetheless, debunk the “straw man argument” that Israel and its supporters cry anti-Semitism every time the nation is criticized. This argument is itself intended to devalue the offense of racism against Jews.

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

What's Stopping a Palestinian State?

Over 72 years, Israel has offered land for peace and a Palestinian state. The Palestinians have rejected all offers. How much longer should the world wait?

What are the facts?

Only a tiny fraction of the world's national groups have nation states. Both Kautsky and Theodor agree to establish, not based on Jewish or US ownership of the land, but on the will of the people. The will of the people is not an international state. Thus, the failure of the Palestinians to achieve nationhood is not a result of a lack of will, but of a lack of a will to accept a powerful strategy, state and leadership. Such, these qualities have enabled the Palestinians, preventing them from seizing multiple opportunities for statehood.

Palestinians embrace a "two-state" strategy. As noted in the 1948 Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian people are dedicated to the complete "liberation of Palestine" and "elimination of Zionism in Palestine." The Charter states that "Actual struggle is the central strategy." While Palestinians leaders have pledged to "achieve the withdrawal of the PLO from every other State of Palestine, the Charter of Hamas, the Palestinian charter group that rules Gaza, states, "Resistance, the PLO, and its affiliates and a fully sovereign state is established with Jerusalem as its capital" on the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, encompassing all of Israel.

Clearly, a strategy focused solely on achieving land in full, as is one that rejects negotiation. Palestinians leaders hold the discipline of not to negotiate on such conditions, demands. Indeed, this all-or-nothing strategy is fully at odds with public knowledge in the United States, Europe, Asia, and increasingly in the Middle East. It's certainly not the path to peaceful resolution.

Palestinians lack political unity. Palestinian leaders and their people are not united in a coherent vision. While both Hamas and Fatah support the goal of a Palestinian state, Hamas and Fatah have different views on how to achieve this goal. Hamas is a more ideologically driven organization, while Fatah is a more pragmatic organization. The PLO policies a more diplomatic approach, focusing on statehood through negotiations. While many Palestinians embrace peace and negotiation with Israel, this view is not promoted or shared by their leaders. In short, Palestinian society is splintered and disunited, incapable of forming a state.

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How can we help the world wait for the Palestinians?

Like many people who care for the state and nation state, the Palestinians have failed to receive a viable strategy, national unity or leadership. We encourage you to share this article with your friends and family. We encourage you to share this article with your friends and family. We encourage you to share this article with your friends and family.

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FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

In fact, no Israeli representative or pro-Israel supporter has ever claimed that all, or even most, criticism of Israel is not legitimate or unwelcome as part of rigorous democratic debate regarding the Jewish state.

Yet the problem remains that there has never been clarity about what constitutes anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, its perpetrators would prefer it remain that way, so their actions are not liable for criminal or civil recourse or social recriminations.

There is obviously a desperate need for an internationally recognized definition of anti-Semitism in order to combat this scourge.

Anti-Semitism remains the only form of prejudice—really a form of racism because it relates to bigoted prejudice against a certain people—that is more likely to be defined by the *perpetrators* than the *victims*.

As a glaring example, bordering on the absurd, the “Patriarch of Anti-Semitism”, Wilhelm Marr, the 19th Century German publicist, who proudly coined the self-identifying term later said, “One cannot today criticize Jews without being called an anti-Semite.” This demonstrates that even the proudest and open of Jew-haters recoiled at being defined as an anti-Semite.

In fact, the whole idea that perpetrators define the nature of a racist attack, and not the victims, contradicts societal norms. In 1999, after the killing of a black teenager in the UK, a subsequent official inquiry defined a racist attack as “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim.” The Jewish community appears to be the only one not allowed to define prejudice against it. Definitions of racisms against other peoples, or Islamophobia, have never received the level or breadth of attacks that the definition of anti-Semitism receives.

Those who seek to defend their anti-Semitic statements disparage the definition by using deflection and distraction in claiming it is impossible to criticize Israel. This has been branded the “Livingstone Formulation,” named after the former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, who constantly made anti-Semitic references and claimed he was merely critiquing Israel’s actions.

Many polls and surveys have demonstrated a direct link between those who hold anti-Semitic beliefs about Jews in general and dislike for Israel. A recent report by the AMCHA Initiative titled “Understanding Campus Antisemitism in 2019 and Its Lessons for Pandemic and Post-Pandemic US Campuses,” reports a rise in harassment of Jewish students on college campuses is linked to anti-Zionist activism. Where BDS and other anti-Israel activities are the highest are also the places where Jews are more regularly harassed and attacked.

A good way to understand whether criticism or attacks on Israel fall foul of the line that separates genuine debate and anti-Semitism are the “three Ds” or the “3D test” of anti-Semitism, (delegitimization, demonization and double standards), which is a set of criteria created in 2004 by former “Prisoner of Zion” Natan Sharansky, to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism.

The previous lack of a unified and vigorous definition meant that anti-Semites could continue to act with immunity and impunity knowing they would not be prosecuted for their actions. Thus, criticizing the IHRA definition is an important defense for those engaged in Jew-hatred.

editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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**FLAME'S WEEKLY
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Even online, Jews do not receive the same level of protection as other targeted groups. Facebook's Director of Content Policy Stakeholder Engagement, Peter Stern, recently attested to the usefulness of the IHRA working definition when Facebook first developed its hate speech policy.

However, Mr. Stern admitted that Facebook does not have a policy aimed at combatting online anti-Semitism. He further admitted that Facebook does not embrace full adoption of the IHRA definition specifically because it condemns modern manifestations of anti-Semitism relating to Israel.

Others, like the *New York Times*, have regularly critiqued the IHRA definition on the basis that it stifles debate and stands against freedom of expression, which wouldn't sound hollow if the *NYT* wasn't itself embroiled in accusations by former editors of "self-censorship" and a "new McCarthyism."

The good news is that we today have the IHRA definition—a strong, logical and insightful one. Yet what remains is for this definition to be enforced more widely by institutions, politicians, celebrities and thought leaders.

Today, disparagement of black people as black people is socially and politically unacceptable—as it should be—and violators pay by dearly, often by losing their jobs and status. That same standard is not observed when it comes to anti-Semitism. Just look at how Mel Gibson has been "rehabilitated" in Hollywood and how Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan continues to rub shoulders with senior American politicians and celebrities, even after referring to Jews as cockroaches and calling Jews "satanic." No racism is acceptable, and no moral person should accept anti-Semites.

I hope you will point out to friends, family, colleagues and your elected representatives that while fair-minded criticism of Israel is welcome, condemnation of the Jewish state using delegitimization, double standards and demonization is always anti-Semitic.

Comparing Israel to Nazi Germany (when there is no affinity), claiming only Israel is a colonial state (among dozens of states ratified by the U.N. in the mid-20th century), accusing Israel of apartheid (when none exists), asserting that today's Jews are not related to the ancient Israelites (when DNA, language and culture link them inarguably)—these are not criticisms, they are examples of anti-Semitism, and their perpetrators should be roundly condemned.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new hasbarah campaign—which explains the sad, but true reasons Palestinians continue to fail at forming their own nation state.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson
President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Some American and European politicians argue that Israel's intention to apply sovereignty to the militarily critical Jordan Valley would inhibit formation of a Palestinian state. Nothing is further from the

truth. The Palestinians don't have a state—despite numerous offers of land for peace by Israel—because the Arab group simply hasn't mustered an adequate strategy, political unity or leadership. They're simply unable to say yes. To clarify this point, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “What's Stopping a Palestinian State?” I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which will run in *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. It spells out specific reasons the Palestinians have failed to create a sovereign state and why it's time for the world—and Israel—to move on. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Pence and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to donate now. Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay committed to realistic policies in relation to Israel, Iran and the entire Middle East.

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