

Deen Haleem  
Raymond  
LD 1351

let me start by indicating how the very nature of this effort is discriminatory. Why - "An Act to Require Antisemitism to Be Considered as Motivation When Determining a Violation of a Criminal or Civil Law" Antisemitism and not racial, ethnic, gender, other religions or sexual orientation are not factored into this?

This act identified one type of discrimination as more important than another - why can't we say that all discrimination is wrong?

Just as important and as indicated above this has nothing to do with racism - it's about silencing speech that's directed against an immensely powerful group -AIPAC - who has threatened elected officials with their political careers if they don't promote legislation to silence all speech against the terrorist, genocidal, apartheid state of Israel and it's Zionist supporters for starters.

The definition was established as a guideline, not an enforceable law. Defining anti-Semitism so broadly and vaguely will have chilling effects on free speech, scholarship and public dialogue around international affairs and current events. In a letter from April 2023, 60 humanitarian and civil rights organizations including Human Rights Watch (HRW), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Israeli rights group B'Tselem, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), appealed to the UN to not use the IHRA definition in its action plan against anti-Semitism and subsequent activities.

Adoption of this definition by governments and institutions has been framed as a way to combat antisemitism. In practice, however, the IHRA definition has often been used to wrongly label criticism of Israel - a state - as antisemitic. Contrary to combating genuine antisemitism, it has the effect of suppressing, non-violent protest, activism and speech that's critical of Israel and/or Zionism. The definition has historically been used to target professors, students, grassroots organizations, human rights groups, and even members of the US Congress, who either document or criticize Israeli policies or human rights violations.

Many leading antisemitism experts, and scholars of Jewish studies and the Holocaust, as well as free speech and anti-racism experts, challenge the definition, arguing that it restricts legitimate criticism of Israel and undermines the fight against antisemitism. Even Ken Stern, the main drafter of the IHRA definition, recently reiterated his concerns about institutions adopting the IHRA definition stating concerns that it's "a blunt instrument to label anyone an antisemite."