

IHRA Out of CUNY! Toolkit

Hello CUNY community and allies! This **Sunday 4/11 at 12 PM** CUNY USS will be voting on a resolution to adopt IHRA, AND a counter-resolution to oppose IHRA. We need all of your support in the coming days to keep IHRA OUT OF CUNY! While it is especially crucial that the CUNY community join these efforts, you don't have to go to CUNY or be a student to support. In this document you will find everything you need to support the campaign to get **#IHRAoutofCUNY**

UPDATE (4/11): CUNY USS REJECTS IHRA! We applaud the USS for recognizing the harmful effects of equating antisemitism with anti-Zionism. We commend USS for taking a stand against the racist and Islamophobic ways that IHRA has been used to smear Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish students. What we saw today was a true praxis of solidarity, and powerful cross-CUNY organizing. We are humbled to be in community with all of you. #IHRAOutOfCUNY!

UPDATE (4/9): Read and share [JLSA's statement about the 4/8 USS Steering Meeting](#)

Here's what we need you to do!

- **Sign** on to the open letter from JLSA
- **Email** USS Delegates (Template included below)
- **Tweet** @CUNYedu and @CUNYuss (sample tweets below)
- **Share** our graphics on social media (at the bottom of this document)
- **Attend** the 4/11 USS Plenary, **using the Zoom background we made to show your support.**
- **Attend** an IHRA out of CUNY info session on Friday, 4/9 at 1:30 PM.
[Register here](#)

See below for more details

If you have any questions, please email jlsa@mail.law.cuny.edu sjp@mail.law.cuny.edu

Action Items

Sign On to JLSA's Open Letter!

Please [sign and share this open letter](#) from the Jewish Law Student Association (JLSA) at CUNY Law. We would love both individual **and** organizational signatures. Any organization can sign, but we especially encourage CUNY student organizations to sign

Email your USS Delegates (CUNY Students)

Attention CUNY Students! Your student representatives need to hear from you! Please contact your student government representative to urge them to vote NO on the IHRA resolution and YES on the JLSA/SJP alternative resolution to combat antisemitism. Please [use this fact sheet](#) for information on IHRA when speaking to delegates.

If you're a CUNY student and you want to reach out to your delegate but don't know who they are, reach out to jlsa@mail.law.cuny.edu

Below is a **sample email**. Feel free to make it your own!

Dear Delegate,

On March 14, the University Student Senate (USS) was asked to consider a resolution, "Condemning Anti-Semitism and Supporting the CUNY Jewish Community." This resolution proposes that CUNY adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. **I write to express my strong opposition to this IHRA resolution, and urge you to support the resolution "Supporting CUNY's Jewish Community, Working to Build Meaningful Mechanisms to End Racism and Bigotry, and Opposing the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism," instead.**

The resolution proposed on March 14 cites the IHRA definition which wrongly conflates antisemitism with anti-Zionism. It is not antisemitic to denounce or act in opposition to the state of Israel or the ideology of Zionism which, like any other political entity or ideology, may be judged, opposed, and criticized, however harshly. This conflation is harmful: Palestine solidarity activists have faced racist and Islamophobic harassment for their political beliefs, under the guise of protecting Jewish students from antisemitism.

By adopting IHRA, the USS would be taking an explicit stance against advocates for justice in Palestine. Rather than adopting this anti-Palestinian definition, we urge this senate to adopt the definition of antisemitism put forth by CUNY Law Jewish Law Students Association and allies "Supporting CUNY's Jewish Community, Working to Build Meaningful Mechanisms

to End Racism and Bigotry, and Opposing the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.” The proposed alternative resolution would support Jewish students, while avoiding the dangers of IHRA, thereby working to create a CUNY campus that is supportive and inclusive to all students.

We urge you to reach out to us if you have any questions, need any more information, or would just like to understand this request and the urgency of your support of our resolution. We would be more than happy to speak with you about this important issue. Your vote is imperative to creating a more equitable CUNY for all students.

Post on Social media!

Twitter:

Now through April 11 (Next USS Plenary meeting, where the resolutions will be voted on), use the **#IHRAoutofCUNY** hashtag to tell CUNY and USS to vote against adopting IHRA and to keep IHRA out of CUNY!

- **Handles to tweet:**
 - @cuny
 - @chancellorcuny
 - @usscuny
 - @cunyjlsa

- **Sample Tweets:**
 - CUNY USS, VOTE NO on the IHRA definition on April 11th and VOTE YES on CUNY SJP and JLSA's resolution.
#IHRAoutofCUNY @cuny @chancellorcuny @usscuny @cunyjlsa

 - If you support Freedom of speech and the right to organize for Palestine, join the campaign to keep #IHRAoutofCUNY @cuny @chancellorcuny @usscuny @cunyjlsa

 - IHRA has been weilded as a tool to criminalize criticism of Israel and support of Palestinian rights. Similar efforts to conflate antisemitism with anti-Zionism have already occurred at CUNY
#IHRAoutofCUNY @cuny @chancellorcuny @usscuny @cunyjlsa

- IHRA Falsely Conflates Criticism of Israel with Antisemitism, Infringes on Free Speech Protections, And Is Routinely Deployed to Chill Campus Speech #IHRAoutofCUNY @cuny @chancellorcuny @usscuny @cunyjsa

Instagram

Post the images below:



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WHAT IS THE IHRA DEFINITION AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH CUNY?

- The IHRA definition **equates criticism of zionism or israel as anti-semitic**, which has already been **used to smear Palestinian, Arab and Muslim organizations, students and faculty** throughout the CUNY system. It is widely recognized as too broad and imprecise to meaningfully support efforts to combat anti-semitism.
- The IHRA definition has been proposed in campuses across the United States, including the CUNY University Student Senate on **March 14th**, but the proposal was tabled until the **Sunday, April 11th** meeting.
- **Baruch and CCNY** University Student Governments have adopted the IHRA definition in recent months. The **USS** voting to adopt it would affect all 25 campuses and nearly 300,000 students.

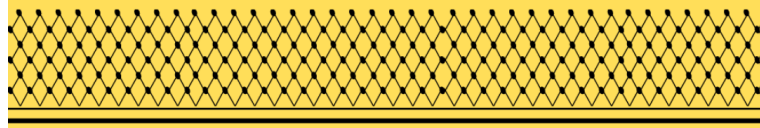
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CAN WE FIGHT IHRA WHILE SUPPORTING JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES?

YES.

CUNY Law's Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Law Students Association have developed an alternative resolution "Supporting CUNY's Jewish Community, Working to Build Meaningful Mechanisms to End Racism and Bigotry, and Opposing the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism"

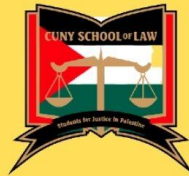
USS Representatives will introduce this resolution to the USS Plenary on April 11th.



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WHAT CAN THE CUNY COMMUNITY AND ALLIES DO ABOUT IT?

- Access our full toolkit here → <https://bit.ly/3fRkNo2>
- **Sign** our open letter on the danger of adopting the IHRA Definition → tinyurl.com/openletterUSSIHRAres
- **URGE** USS representatives to **VOTE NO** on the IHRA definition on April 11th and **VOTE YES** on CUNY SJP and JLSA's resolution.
- **Email** USS to express your opposition to adopting IHRA (template in toolkit) USSOffice@gmail.com
- **Repost this** and follow [@CUNYLawSJP](https://twitter.com/CUNYLawSJP), [@CUNYJLSA](https://twitter.com/CUNYJLSA), and [@FREECUNY](https://twitter.com/FREECUNY) to stay updated



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CUNY: Stop the passage of anti-

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The IHRA's definition is widely recognized as racist and anti-Palestinian for its false equation of anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism.

if you don't understand why this is extremely harmful, read more at <https://palestinelegal.org/distorted-definition>

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HOW YOU CAN HELP:



- EMAIL USS USING THIS TEMPLATE OR YOUR OWN WORDS:
[TINYURL.COM/USSIHRARES](https://tinyurl.com/ussihrares)

EMAIL: USSOFFICE@GMAIL.COM

- CALL USS USING THIS TEMPLATE OR YOUR OWN WORDS:
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/PHONEUSSIHRARES](https://tinyurl.com/phoneussihrares)

PHONE: 646-664-8844

- SIGN ONTO THE "OPEN LETTER TO THE CUNY COMMUNITY RE:
USS IHRA RESOLUTION" AUTHORED BY THE JEWISH LAW
STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AT CUNY LAW :
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/OPENLETTERIHRAUSS](https://tinyurl.com/openletterihrauss)

- REPOST THIS AND TAG [@USSCUNY](https://twitter.com/USSCUNY)

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**ACCESS THE FULL MEDIA
TOOLKIT HERE TO TAKE
ACTION:**

<https://bit.ly/3fRkNo2>

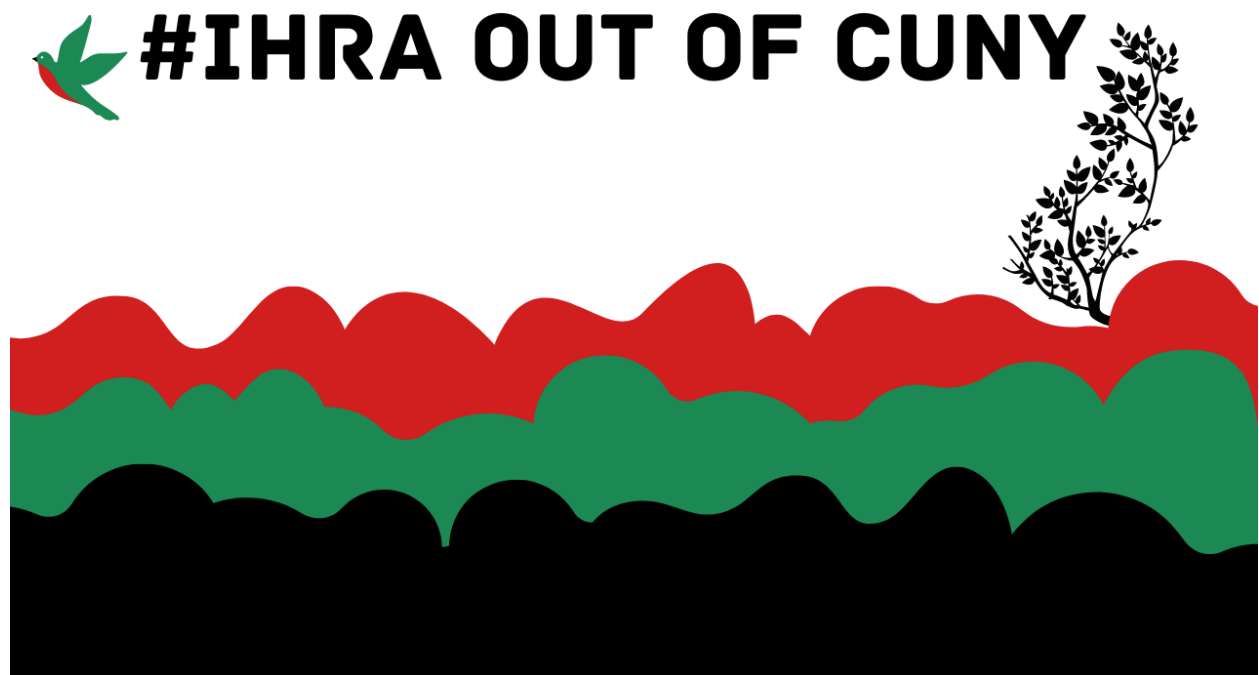
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Attend the USS Hearing on Sunday, April 11th at 12 pm!

Attend the plenary via Facebook live at on the [USS Facebook page](#). COMMENT COMMENT COMMENT using #IHRAoutofCUNY on the live video to let USS know why you oppose IHRA and support the JLSA/SJP resolution instead!

If you are a CUNY student, you can also directly join the USS plenary meeting. Ask your delegate for the link or email us. Please use a zoom background to express your opposition to IHRA and support of the JLSA/SJP resolution, (non-delegates are not permitted to speak at the meeting). Comment on the Facebook live stream while you zoom in!

Make your Zoom background this image to show your support visibly during the meeting ([link here](#)):



Background Materials:

JLSA Statement about the 4/8 USS Steering Meeting

- Our resolution was introduced on 4/8, for a vote on whether it should be added to the 4/11 Plenary meeting agenda. Proponents of the IHRA resolution targeted Jewish students on the basis of their Jewishness and attempted to marginalize other students using racially tinged language. Read our full statement here:
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UcEqKQ-l0_yFOd-QQVKnxpRtE28YTL9M-hIJ0HBM1aA/edit

JLSA and SJP's proposed resolution:

- This is the the resolution that JLSA and SJP have proposed, which we are asking USS to vote on on Sunday, 4/11:
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RhhXzJ9UAFhmt9E2bToMt0SNDwZSNfNK/view?usp=sharing>

Original IHRA Resolution:

- Two USS delegates introduced this resolution, which would adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, on 3/14
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DL-95SUaw8EhoJo5ydum6ahOnFQWVaAl/view?usp=sharing>

Fact Sheet about IHRA:

- See below for background information about the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s definition of antisemitism. Please use these facts to talk to your delegates about why we should oppose IHRA
- For a downloadable PDF, see here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nLxJg4CdU9J69wLmbi0AVWtuf-QIID2W/view?usp=sharing>

Facts about the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism:

- Overview:

- IHRA was drafted at the request of the UN agency European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia [EUMC]. The EUMC refused to adopt the IHRA definition and has since removed reference to it from their website.
- While the definition itself is vague and seemingly benign, 7 of the 11 examples provided refer not just to Jewish people, but to the state of Israel; this is a deliberate strategy to label criticism of Israel and of Zionism as antisemitic.
- The IHRA definition conflates antisemitism with criticism of Israel and with anti-zionism
 - Political Zionism--which calls for the creation of a Jewish ethno-nation state--is a relatively recent political movement that emerged in Europe during the 19th century as one of many responses to European antisemitism.
 - Zionism is not synonymous with Judaism. In fact, a growing number of Jewish people reject Zionism,¹ and some religious sects oppose Zionism on religious grounds.
- The IHRA definition chills academic freedom and campus free speech, and may violate First Amendment protections:
 - Kenneth Stern, **the primary author of the IHRA definition, has argued against the adoption of IHRA in academic settings.** In a 2017 Congressional Hearing, he stated, "the definition not only harms academic freedom but will also harm the interests of Jewish students and faculties."
 - Legal experts have stated that "Speech critical of Israeli policies or supportive of Palestinian rights cannot constitute the basis for government—including public university—regulation. The U.S. Constitution protects political speech activities from government interference in order to ensure that even those who protest government policies can speak their mind without fear of retribution."²
- IHRA has already been wielded as a tool to criminalize criticism of Israel and support of Palestinian rights
 - Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) Canada has documented 38 instances of the IHRA definition being used to criminalize opposition to Israel and Zionism across North America and Europe.³
 - Similar efforts to conflate antisemitism with anti-Zionism have already occurred at CUNY.⁴

¹ <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/12/antisemitism-zionism-donald-trump-israel-palestine>

² <https://palestinelegal.org/redefinition-efforts>

³ <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ihra-definition-at-work/>

⁴ For example:

- Even within the Jewish community, IHRA is extremely controversial and not widely accepted.
 - Over 40 major Jewish organizations worldwide, including the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs,⁵ as well Jewish Voice for Peace--the fastest growing Jewish organization in American--have rejected IHRA. In addition, hundreds of Jewish academics and scholars specializing in antisemitism, Jewish and Holocaust history, have publicly opposed it⁶⁷
- The Bottom Line:
 - Adopting IHRA risks harming Palestinian students and their allies, while doing little to protect Jewish students. A far more effective way to protect Jewish students at CUNY while ensuring that all students can be safe would be to adopt the alternative antisemitism resolution.
- For more information, see:
 - <https://palestinelegal.org/redefinition-efforts>

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- In 2020, a Palestinian student at CUNY Law was falsely accused of antisemitism by a Jewish student who felt threatened by the presence of SJP on campus. The Palestinian student was later the [target of a concerted harassment effort](#). In response to calls for her expulsion from CUNY Law that were instigated by [Act.il](#), an app with ties to Israel's intelligence and military apparatus, CUNY Law responded with a statement condemning the video as "antisemitic"; the school later took down the statement and issued an internal apology but has yet to publicly address it
 - In 2019, CUNY [launched an investigation](#) into CUNY Law's partnership with Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP) after after a right-wing group accused DCIP of having links to "terrorism."
 - In 2018, CUNY [canceled](#) a Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) event titled *The General's Son: The Transformation of an Israeli in Palestine* over fears the event would be controversial
 - In 2018, CUNY [investigated](#) a doctoral student for comments made that were criticizing Israel in response to an email advertising a Fulbright fellowship in Israel on a student listserv
 - In 2016, CUNY conducted a major [investigation](#) into Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), after the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) accused SJP of creating a hostile environment for Jewish students and sought to have SJP banned at CUNY. The final [report](#) cleared SJP of wrongdoing, found that acts of anti semitism could not be attributable to SJP, and found no support for the claim that Jewish students had left CUNY because of anti-semitism.
 - In 2011, Brooklyn College [rescinded an academic appointment](#) of a faculty members who supported Palestinian human rights.

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<https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/first-ever-40-jewish-groups-worldwide-oppose-equating-antisemitism-with-criticism-of-israel/#english>;

<https://jcua-online.medium.com/jewish-council-on-urban-affairs-opposes-government-use-of-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism-94efdc4b54ce>

⁶ <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4513-a-call-from-jewish-academics-to-french-mps>

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https://www.dropbox.com/s/czj7y5cahe4ombq/JoInt%20letter%20of%2056%20scholars%20to%20Facebook%20-%20Don%27t%20adopt%20IHRA%20definition%20of%20antisemitism.pdf?dl=0&fbclid=IwAR28q7UqrP_Uk6m64i4EW4NMTGO_ySGMcqSa-lThrtBWeM-XMw5ibtI6tb0

- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f52a48dcce98340e25350e2/t/602445c3f0a21322c2e327f9/1612989891845/ARC+-+IHRA+Handbook+%28English%29.pdf>
- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f52a48dcce98340e25350e2/t/5fff2d4e058b964b22eb8f33/1610558799440/IHRA+Report+v1.1.1+-+20201025.pdf>
- <https://mndaily.com/266599/opinion/opinion-oppose-minnesota-hillels-referendum-to-adopt-the-ihras-working-definition-of-antisemitism/>
- <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/jerusalem-declaration/>

Press Release

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AHEAD OF CUNY-WIDE STUDENT GOVERNMENT VOTE, JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN STUDENT GROUPS RALLY AGAINST CONTROVERSIAL IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Led by an alliance between the City University of New York (CUNY) Jewish Law Students Association (JLSA) and CUNY Law Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), students, academics and supporters are calling for an end to efforts to impose the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism on all CUNY schools ahead of the April 11 CUNY University Student Senate vote on the matter.

The IHRA definition became internationally renowned when UK based pro-Israeli groups and government councils wielded it to cancel Palestinian charity events, to override student

divestment motions, and to attack Labour party members. The US State Department used it to defame Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as “antisemitic” for critiquing racist Israeli policies, citing the IHRA definition which includes “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavor.”

JLSA and SJP will introduce a resolution rejecting the IHRA definition. Adina Marx-Arpadi, President of JLSA, informs that, “By equating antisemitism with antizionism, the IHRA definition not only perpetuates anti-Palestinian racism, but it does little to protect Jewish people. Our proposed resolution offers a more protective definition of antisemitism that situates it in a broader struggle against all forms of oppression.”

Nerdeen Kiswani, Vice President of CUNY Law Student Government and President of CUNY Law SJP said, "as a Palestinian student and organizer, efforts to falsely conflate antisemitism with anti-Zionism have already been wielded as a tool to criminalize our organizing at CUNY. IHRA criminalizes criticism of Israel, support of Palestinian rights, and even condemning our own oppression as Palestinians. IHRA must stay out of CUNY."

Daniel Cione, of CUNY Law SJP added, "The IHRA definition erases white supremacist violence against Jewish people and instead scapegoats Palestinians and their allies. It has no place in one of the largest public university systems in the United States."

An investigative report by the Academic Board of University College London found the definition deflected institutional accountability for antisemitism, and found the IHRA definition "not fit for purpose."

“It speaks volumes that the sponsor and primary author of the IHRA definition have since rejected the definition as a threat to the safety of Jewish students and to free speech. We can expect a rise in McCarthyite thought policing in tandem with a rise in racism, just as we see across Europe” warned human rights attorney Lamis Deek who advises students in the US and the UK.

The coalition encourages all people to join and follow the Sunday vote by going to https://www.facebook.com/UniversityStudentSenate/videos/?ref=page_internal