

Draft Resolution on Anti-Semitism

Sponsors: Task Force on Israel, World Jewry, and International Human Rights; Task Force on Jewish Security and The Bill of Rights

Summary: This resolution is a response to the rise in violent anti-Semitic incidents in the United States and around the world. It speaks to the complex nature of anti-Semitism as a phenomenon and details the wide diversity of concepts that the term comprises. The resolution calls for a definition that recognizes that animosity toward Israel and Zionism can cross the line between legitimate criticism and anti-Semitism. At the same time, the definition should recognize that not all criticism of Israel or its government's policies constitutes anti-Semitism. It notes that political events in the Middle East should never be used to justify anti-Semitism. The resolution also addresses issues related to the climate on American campuses. The JCPA has adopted policies on anti-Semitism in Europe and on campuses, with which this draft policy is consistent, but JCPA has not adopted a broad policy on anti-Semitism in many years.

1 In 2014 and the first part of 2015, there were three deadly terrorist attacks on European Jewish
2 institutions: the Jewish museum in Brussels, a kosher grocery store in Paris, and a synagogue in
3 Copenhagen. In the United States, while the overall number of anti-Semitic incidents remains at
4 historically low levels, violent attacks are becoming more common. In one incident in Kansas
5 City, a gunman killed three people while firing on two Jewish facilities.

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7 These fatal attacks took place against a backdrop of aggression against Jews and Jewish
8 institutions, including vandalism and graffiti, verbal and physical harassment of individuals, and
9 anti-Semitic rhetoric as part of public discourse. Sometimes, attempts are made to justify such
10 behavior by referring to Israel's ongoing conflict with the Palestinians.

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12 While anti-Semitism exists in communities all over the world, a number of factors that are
13 coalescing in Europe make the situation there increasingly volatile. White supremacists, neo-
14 fascists, and radical Islamists use anti-Semitic speech as a tool that can result in violence against
15 Jews and Jewish institutions. There are also groups that seek to demonize Israel and, in doing so,
16 often cross the line from legitimate criticism to outright anti-Semitism. This type of
17 delegitimization also finds expression in the United States, particularly on some college
18 campuses, in churches, and in other institutions.

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20 Animosity expressed against Judaism as a religion, including specific Jewish rituals such as
21 circumcision or kosher slaughter, can have a chilling effect on Jewish religious practice. Anti-
22 Semitism expressed toward Jews and Judaism can also be infused with ultra-nationalist rhetoric,
23 a phenomenon more common in Eastern Europe. Holocaust denial is a continuing phenomenon
24 around the world. The rejection of traditional methods of Holocaust education in Europe by
25 some Arab and Muslim diaspora communities in areas such as the depressed *banlieues* of Paris is
26 one example of this problem. All of these various issues are exacerbated by one of the most
27 unsettling and pernicious anti-Semitic canards: that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a real
28 document, and Jews, who present themselves as victims, actually control the world.

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30 Given the wide diversity of concepts that the term “anti-Semitism” covers, it is unsurprising that
31 contemporary anti-Semitism is expressed in a variety of ways. This type of complexity also
32 means that it is both difficult to define and challenging to combat. One of the most contentious
33 issues in trying to create a standard definition of anti-Semitism is how to differentiate between
34 legitimate criticism of Israel and delegitimizing tactics that utilize anti-Semitic tropes, imagery,
35 and rhetoric.

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37 The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes that:

- 38 • Anti-Semitism is a continuing problem in communities all over the world, and we must
39 oppose it wherever and whenever it occurs.
- 40 • To truly understand what anti-Semitism is and how to fight it effectively, a sound working
41 definition is needed. That definition must recognize that animosity toward Israel and Zionism
42 can cross the line between legitimate criticism and anti-Semitism. At the same time, the
43 definition should recognize that not all criticism of Israel or its government’s policies
44 constitutes anti-Semitism.
- 45 • Political events in the Middle East cannot be used to justify anti-Semitic rhetoric or actions.
- 46 • To be effective, we must employ targeted strategies to specific problems rather than
47 imposing a blanket solution to try to cure a number of different ills.

- 48 • Working to protect democratic and open societies that allow freedom of expression while
49 protecting basic human rights is the best way to ensure a high quality of life for all people,
50 Jews and non-Jews alike.
- 51 • Operating under the core principle of devotion to *Klal Yisrael*—the totality of the nation of
52 Israel—American Jews have a mandate not only to care for the health and welfare of those in
53 our own communities, but also to provide for the safety and security of Jewish communities
54 around the world.
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56 The community relations field should:

- 57 • Work with legislators on the local, state, and national level to support carefully crafted
58 resolutions condemning domestic and international anti-Semitism.
- 59 • Ask interfaith and intergroup partners to condemn anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incidents
60 in state and local communities and on the national and international level.
- 61 • Support government officials in their efforts to identify and confront domestic and
62 international extremist groups, whether they are neo-Nazi, white supremacist, or radical
63 Islamist. Remind them to emphasize that political events in the Middle East or elsewhere
64 never justify anti-Semitism.
- 65 • Consult with national agencies and NGOs about anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, including
66 violence, vandalism, and expressions of anti-Semitic sentiment in the media and government.
- 67 • Work with U.S. governmental officials to persuade the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency
68 either to readopt the EUMC’s working definition of anti-Semitism or to formulate a new one
69 that recognizes both traditional forms of anti-Semitism and the new form that demonizes the
70 State of Israel.
- 71 • Work with European agencies and governments toward shared goals (e.g., making clear the
72 need for special envoys or representatives on anti-Semitism for European governments and
73 the EU).
- 74 • Urge European officials both to reassess their legislation, law enforcement, and education
75 approaches to anti-Semitism and to consistently and publicly denounce anti-Semitism at
76 every turn to better address these serious and troubling issues. In countries where

- 77 constitutionally permissible, encourage governments to enforce laws against anti-Semitism
78 and hate speech.
- 79 • Provide a vehicle for Jewish and other advocacy organizations to come together with campus
80 groups to develop well-coordinated strategies for protecting Jewish students from hostile
81 campus environments, and to support initiatives that promote Israel and the well-being of
82 Jewish students. Jewish and other advocacy organizations should be a resource and support
83 to students, respecting and advancing their consensus strategies. Outside groups should give
84 high priority to de-escalating conflict while promoting a climate in which Jewish students are
85 physically secure and able to participate fully in campus life.
 - 86 • Work with faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and appropriate campus organizations to
87 respond to anti-Jewish bigotry through education, programming, study of campus climate,
88 investigation of complaints, and vigorous application of appropriate campus codes of conduct
89 where necessary.
 - 90 • Help campus leaders to understand as well as educate others about the distinctions between
91 mere speech—including criticism of Israeli policies—and anti-Israel or anti-Jewish conduct
92 that creates an atmosphere that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it
93 deprives a student of access to the benefits or opportunities provided by the school.
 - 94 • Help foster Jewish life on campus that is inclusive and diverse in opinions and activities
95 related to the Jewish community.