What Is… Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, Criticism of Israel?

Antisemitism

Definition: 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. Examples of manifestations of antisemitism can be found here: **https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism**

Examples:

- Stereotypes (e.g., Jews are greedy or control the media)
- Holocaust denial or trivialization
- Vandalism or violence targeting Jewish people or institutions
- Harassment based on Jewish identity or appearance
- Using "Zionist" as a code word to attack Jews

Key Insight: Antisemitism is not just about hate - it's about scapegoating, conspiracy theories, and exclusion of Jews from public life or equal treatment.

Zionism & Anti-Zionism

Definition: Zionism is the movement for self-determination and statehood of the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of Israel. By contrast, anti-Zionism rejects Israel as a legitimate member of the community of nations and denies the right for Jews to self-determination and to establish a state in the land of Israel. The vast majority of Jews around the world view a connection to Israel as part of their Jewish identity.

Examples:

- Calling for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state
- Demonizing Israel with comparisons to Nazis or apartheid regimes
- Excluding Jews from social spaces or activism unless they renounce Zionism
- Downplaying or negating the historic and spiritual Jewish connection to the land of Israel

When criticism crosses the line: Criticism of any government, including the Israeli government is valid — but denying Israel's right to exist or calling for its destruction is a form of antisemitism.

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Anti-Israel Criticism

Definition: Critical statements, actions or arguments directed at the State of Israel — its government, policies, military actions, or political decisions.

Key Insight: Criticizing Israeli government policies is not inherently anti-Israel. Many Israelis themselves, as well as American Jews and other supporters of Israel, regularly express criticism of specific government actions while remaining deeply committed to Israel's security, future, and right to exist.

Just as criticizing U.S. government policies does not make someone anti-American, challenging Israeli decisions - whether on military operations, domestic law or other issues - does not make someone anti-Israel. In a healthy democracy, open debate and accountability are essential. Genuine support for a country should include holding its leaders to high standards and advocating for change when necessary.

NOT ON MY CAMPUS HUB

About ADL

ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all. More at **www.adl.org**.

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