



## Press Release

October 15, 2021  
Canberra, Australia

### Scott Morrison Pledges to Adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism

On the evening of October 13, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that Australia will adopt the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism (IHRA-WDA). It is the State of Palestine's position that racism, discrimination, hatred, violence, or intimidation targeting a specific group of people because of their ethnicity, race, or religion, including anti-Semitism, is a serious threat that must be addressed and fought against. The IHRA-WDA, however, conflates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, undermines the Palestinian struggle for freedom and equality, and trivialises and distorts the grave threat of anti-Semitism by weaponizing it for political purposes. As such, Morrison's pledge to adopt this Working Definition in Australia is deeply concerning and must be rejected.

Kenneth Stern, the American Jewish Committee's expert on anti-Semitism for 25 years and lead author of the IHRA-WDA, has openly criticised the use of the Working Definition to suppress political speech and avoid any complexity by defining anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism, a notion that Stern has said he finds "offensive". It is important to note that Stern is himself a Zionist but wrote in an article for The Guardian: "I suspect that [if I] had been born into a Palestinian family displaced in 1948, [I might] have a different view of Zionism, and that need not be because [of anti-Semitism]." Stern has also pointed out that there is a debate within the Jewish community about whether being Jewish requires one to be a Zionist, and he fears that by allowing governments to define anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism, the Jewish community is allowing their governments to decide this issue for them.

The IHRA-WDA has been frequently weaponised to silence Palestinians and their supporters. Solidarity with the Palestinian people is not anti-Semitic and those who stand against violations of human rights and international law committed by any state, including Israel, have no reason to apologise for their principled positions. There are countless Jewish individuals and organisations in Australia, Israel, and globally, engaging in advocacy against anti-Semitism and Israel's unjust treatment of the Palestinian people simultaneously. This should not be surprising, as the fight against anti-Semitism is inherently tied to all other anti-racist movements, including the Palestinian cause.

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific urges the Australian government to reject the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism in Australia, as it undermines both the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice, and equality as well as the global struggle against anti-Semitism.

For more information, please contact the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific: ph. (02) 6286 9193.

