

# Judaism is a 'race': US federal judge rules entitled to legal protection



*A Jewish man wearing a kippa, or Jewish religious skull cap* **AFP**

**Plaintiff Joshua Bonadana sued a Christian college for refusing to hire him due to his Jewish roots**

In first, a US federal magistrate judge ruled that Judaism falls under the “race” category under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which provides legal protection to those discriminated based on their race.

The Louisiana Magistrate judge ruled that while the Supreme Court has refrained from defining “race’ under the statute, Jews have been treated as a racial or ethnic group, warranting legal protection against discrimination.

“Modern sociologists and anthropologists, especially with advancements in DNA studies, debate whether Judaism is a people, a religion, or both. There is no doubt, however, that many people have and continue to view being Jewish as a racial identity,” Magistrate Mark Hornsby wrote.

Plaintiff Joshua Bonadana sued a Christian college for refusing to hire him due to his Jewish roots.

Magistrate Hornsby explained that Jews have often been the victims of anti-Semitism because of their Jewish background regardless of whether or not they practice the religion — demonstrating that Jews are discriminated not on the basis of their religion but rather their genealogy.

“America is no stranger to anti-Semitism, which is often rooted in prejudice against a person based on his heritage/ethnicity without regard to the person’s particular religious beliefs,” the magistrate wrote.

“Jewish citizens have been excluded from certain clubs or neighborhoods, and they have been denied jobs and other opportunities based on the fact that they were Jewish, with no particular concern as to a given individual’s religious leanings,” he reasoned.

Bonadona alleged that the coach who interviewed him for a position said the president of the Christian college refused to hire him due to his “Jewish blood.”

Magistrate Hornsby called the ruling “precedent-setting” after stating that he could not find any prior such discrimination cases based on anti-Semitism, suggesting it may pave the way for future cases.

However, the college has the right to request a review of the ruling by a federal district court judge before the court adopts it. Magistrate judges are appointed in order to help district court judges with their caseload.

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