

# Trump signs executive order to fight antisemitism on US campuses

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.



U.S. President Donald Trump holds a campaign rally in Sunrise, Florida, U.S., November 26, 2019 - (photo credit: REUTERS/YURI GRIPAS)

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US President Donald Trump announced the signing of an executive order (EO) on Wednesday that calls on government departments enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

Specifically, the order is aimed at federally-funded universities and colleges and will require the Department of Education, when reviewing whether there has been a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to consider this widely accepted definition of antisemitism as part of its assessment of whether an incident or activity may be antisemitic. As such, according to an explanation of the EO provided by the Anti-Defamation League, criticism of Israel could be considered antisemitic if it becomes “intentional, unlawful, discriminatory intimidation and harassment against Jews.”

The IHRA defines antisemitism as “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.”

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Department of Education could cut federal funding for institutions that fail to remedy antisemitic incidents that fall under the title.

A senior administration official told The Jerusalem Post on Tuesday that antisemitism on campuses is often hidden in an anti-Israel agenda. If campuses that receive money from the government adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in cases of discrimination, students who will feel that they are being bullied on college campuses would be able to complain to their institution's administration, who will then need to decide if the incident is considered antisemitic.

"We began to focus on this issue in the late winter/spring of this year when we were alarmed frankly at a rise in antisemitic rhetoric, including unfortunately from leading political figures," the official said. "We looked at the data, and we saw that there'd been a rise in antisemitic incidents, and we began a policy process to figure out physically what we could do on the subject."

A second official explained to the post that the policy of the executive branch is to enforce Title VI in order to prohibit discrimination rooted in antisemitism "as vigorously as against all other forms of discrimination," noting that this will be the language used in the order.

For many years, the Department of Education has said that Title VI is meant to protect students of all religions: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others.

The majority of the Jewish community celebrated Trump's announcement.

Republican Jewish Coalition national chairman Senator Norm Coleman called the move "truly historic" and said that "President Trump has extended to Jewish students very strong, meaningful legal protection from antisemitic discrimination."



*Jason D. Greenblatt@GreenblattJD*

*Republican Jewish Coalition Applauds @POTUS for Historic Executive Order Extending Title VI Protection to Jewish College Students. Historic executive order by @POTUS.*

*[http://www.rjchq.org/rjc\\_strongly\\_applauds\\_president\\_trump\\_for\\_historic\\_executive\\_order\\_extending\\_title\\_vi\\_protection\\_to\\_jewish\\_college\\_students ...](http://www.rjchq.org/rjc_strongly_applauds_president_trump_for_historic_executive_order_extending_title_vi_protection_to_jewish_college_students...)*

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Coleman added that President Trump is not only the most pro-Israel president in American history but with this EO, “President Trump has shown himself to be the most pro-Jewish president, as well.”

Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, said, “this is the right move in the fight to tackle antisemitism head-on.

“In the face of hatred, one must not remain silent, but respond strongly,” Danon continued. “This will target the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement] that has grown in recent years. If academic institutions do not act against this antisemitic movement, they will pay a heavy price.”

According to the American Jewish Committee’s most recent survey on antisemitism in the US, nearly half of Jewish young people between the ages of 18 and 29 have been victims of antisemitic acts over the past five years. More than one-third said they had experienced antisemitism on an American college campus themselves or know someone who has.

“To date, though, responses to antisemitism on many campuses have often fallen short, leaving Jewish students vulnerable,” AJC said in a statement. “Existing federal policy has not been fully enforced and today’s order merely gives Jews what other groups have long enjoyed—the right not to be subject to a hostile environment on campus. There is nothing inconsistent with protecting freedom of expression and providing Jews the same protections accorded other minorities.”

The ADL, too, said that “in a climate of rising antisemitism, this executive order provides valuable guidance on antisemitism, giving law enforcement and campus officials an important additional tool to help identify and fight this pernicious hate.

“It also reaffirms protection of Jews under Title VI without infringing on First Amendment rights,” the ADL statement continued. “These are all important steps forward.”

The Orthodox Union applauded the EO and said it hopes that now “those who seek to use our academic institutions as places to stoke anti-Jewish sentiment are

now on notice: There will be consequences for their racism.”

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz urged “more countries to adopt similar measures.”

Christian supporters of Israel and Trump also praised the EO.

The leadership of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) put out a lengthy statement and noted that “one cannot defeat that which they are unwilling to define.” The organization thanked both Trump and his son-in-law and special advisor Jared Kushner for their “tireless efforts to shepherd this order forward.”

The Israel Allies Foundation of thousands of MPs from around the world, including many evangelical Christians, also stressed how much the president has done for the Jews.

“President Trump has done more than any US President in history to combat antisemitism and stand with the Jewish state of Israel and the well being of its people,” said IAF president Josh Reinstein. “We will work with our network of 40 Israel Allies Caucuses around the world to make sure other countries follow his lead.”

Dr. Mike Evans, a member of the president’s faith advisory team, explained that the core issue in the Palestinian peace process and in Iran’s “terror obsession” with Israel is antisemitism, which he said is “also very much alive in America.

“Jews in Israel are not killed over land; they are killed because they are Jews,” Evans stressed.

But not all Jewish organizations or activists celebrated the announcement.

Jewish Democratic Council of America executive director Halie Soifer instead attacked the president and said “he is partially responsible” for the rise in antisemitism in American and therefore “just three days after President Trump characterized Jews as money-hungry ‘killers,’ President Trump has zero credibility to take meaningful action to combat the scourge of antisemitism.”

Soifer said that “If President Trump truly wanted to combat antisemitism, he would accept responsibility for his role in perpetuating antisemitic conspiracy theories and emboldening white nationalism.

“We said it before and we’ll say it again – Donald Trump is the biggest threat to American Jews,” she continued.

Taking the criticism one step further, J Street’s president Jeremy Ben-Ami added: “This executive order, like the stalled congressional legislation it is based on, appears designed less to combat antisemitism than to have a chilling effect on free speech and to crack down on campus critics of Israel.”

He explained that the expert who drafted the definition of antisemitism that is being adopted by this executive order, Kenneth S. Stern, has opposed its application on college campuses. Stern wrote in a New York Times op-ed that, “If this bill becomes law...students and faculty members will be scared into silence, and administrators will err on the side of suppressing or censoring speech.”

Ben-Ami said that “the same right-wing groups who turn a blind eye to the president’s hateful rhetoric have promoted this executive order as part of a cynical push to turn the issue of antisemitism into a partisan political weapon, instead of seriously combating it in all its forms.”

As expected, pro-Palestinian organizations also expressed their dissatisfaction. For example, the head of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, Yousef Munayyer, said that Trump’s order is part of a sustained campaign “to silence Palestinian-rights activism” by equating opposition to Israeli treatment of Palestinians with antisemitism.

“Israeli apartheid is a very hard product to sell in America, especially in progressive spaces,” Munayyer said in a statement published by *The New York Times*, “and realizing this, many Israeli apartheid apologists, Trump included, are looking to silence a debate they know they can’t win.”

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Source:

<https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism/Trump-expected-to-issue-executive-order-against-antisemitism-on-campus-610540>

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