

**Joint Statement on Antisemitism**  
**UO Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine**  
**UO Jewish Voice for Peace**  
**Jewish Voice for Peace Eugene**

During the week of April 29, 2024, in response to the University of Oregon's financial complicity with Israel's ongoing war in Palestine, which has [destroyed 80% of schools](#) and all universities in Gaza, a broad coalition of student organizers set up a solidarity encampment known as The Popular University for Gaza on the UO lawn. [Faculty and staff mobilized to support students' right to protest](#) and call for UO's divest from Jasper Ridge Hedge Fund (which has financial ties to defense contractors linked to the Israeli occupation), UO's implementation of a Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign (which has appeared in ASUO proceedings as far back as 2018), and the cessation of academic exchanges with Israeli Universities.

The groups most closely involved with the encampment include students from all religious and ethnic backgrounds. At the University of Oregon, Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists, and those with other spiritual, religious, and/or secular beliefs have found solidarity in their opposition to colonialism, genocide, and war crimes. These students are astute scholars of academic texts as well as educated consumers of media, and they know that many in the broader community may seek to distort their message by weaponizing accusations of antisemitism against the encampment. For this reason, Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine at UO and Jewish Voice for Peace at UO have come together to state unequivocally the following:

- 1) We acknowledge that antisemitism has been an animating force throughout the history of the United States. Hostility, discrimination, prejudice, and violence toward Jews or people perceived as Jews, i.e. the figure of "the Jew," has animated more than a thousand years of European Christian culture and is entangled [with antiblackness, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and nativism](#) to this day.
- 2) We reject any potential criticism that the goals of the solidarity encampment are inherently antisemitic. The weaponization of antisemitism is a political tool to preemptively delegitimize political voices and the diversity of Jews. Jewish students, faculty, and staff are already a driving force in, and welcomed and encouraged to become a part of, our cross-religious, cross-cultural movement for solidarity with all victims of colonialism, war, racism, and bigotry including antisemitism and Islamophobia. Solidarity with the oppressed and colonized and working together for collective liberation has been a core feature of traditions of Jewish political struggles, among them

the Jewish Labor Bund or the American Jewish Labor movement, not despite but **because of** Jewish experiences of marginalization, oppression, and genocide.

- 3) We adopt [Jewish Voice for Peace](#)'s definitions of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, which state in part:

*Antisemitism is discrimination, targeting, violence, and dehumanizing stereotypes directed at Jews because they are Jewish... We understand antisemitism as historically contextual, situated amidst interrelated conditions and struggles. That's why we fight antisemitism within, and as part of, broader struggles against oppression and for collective liberation. For instance, white nationalist violence has been on the rise in the U.S., fueled by anti-immigrant and racist manifestos, sentiments, and conspiracy theories, such as the "great replacement" theory. Jews are among the targets of white nationalist violence, along with Black people, immigrants, Muslims, and trans and queer people, among others. Our safety is bound together with the safety of all people, and none of us is free if we aren't all free. Attacking Jewish individuals or communal spaces for being Jewish, or blaming the Jewish people for the actions of the Israeli government, is antisemitic and unacceptable and flatly contrary to the values of our movement. Our movement for justice in Palestine stands firm as an anti-racist movement, which of course includes opposing all acts of antisemitism.*

In other words, anti-Zionism is not antisemitic, and many Jews are anti-Zionists. Our opposition to all forms of antisemitism includes opposition to the targeting of Jewish-led solidarity encampments by Zionist extremists, for example, at UCLA. This conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism is itself antisemitic in its erasure of the voices, stories, and experiences of Jewish individuals across the diaspora, some of whom have actively protested the Zionist project for over a century and are continuing to protest the Israeli genocide and fight for Palestinian liberation in the current moment.

- 4) We reject UO's [use of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) definition](#) of antisemitism. [Numerous](#) scholars, human rights experts and Israeli and International civil society groups including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) have warned that adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism protects Israel from legitimate criticism and prohibits protected speech. Using IHRA's definition of antisemitism, as [the United States Senate is now dangerously considering](#), is harmful to UO's principles of dialogue, education, and academic freedom, and its continued use will have significant negative impact on the ability of UO students, faculty, and staff - including Jews - to have meaningful conversations about issues of racism, settler colonialism, genocide, and [scholasticide](#).

In the collective best interest of all UO students, faculty, and staff, we urge the University of Oregon to adopt a definition of antisemitism informed by the one above from Jewish Voice for Peace, which emphasizes the crucial distinction between Jewish individuals and the state of Israel, as opposed to any expanded definition which conflates criticism of Israel with antisemitism, such as the IHRA definition. We implore the UO administration to follow the lead of [The Jerusalem Declaration](#) in clarifying the definition of antisemitism and avoiding the simplistic conflation of Judaism with Zionism.

Further information can be found here:

[Explainer: The Global Far Right and Israel](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions | UO Free Speech and Safety at UO](#)

[House passes bill to expand definition of antisemitism amid growing campus protests over Gaza war | AP News](#)

[IHRA Explainer & Messaging \(formatted\) - Nov. 2023](#)

[Jewish Voice for Peace](#)

[On Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism and Dangerous Conflations - JVP](#)

[Reject Definitions of Antisemitism that Encompass Protected Speech | American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[Scholasticide Definition](#)

[Skin in the Game | Political Research Associates](#)

[The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#)

[UN experts deeply concerned over 'scholasticide' in Gaza | OHCHR](#)

[UN urged to reject antisemitism definition over 'misuse' to shield Israel](#)

[What is Antisemitism? Diaspora Alliance](#)