

## C-CAT Memo

# **The Global Imams Council (GIC) Adopts the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: *The Import of the Decision***

November 2, 2020

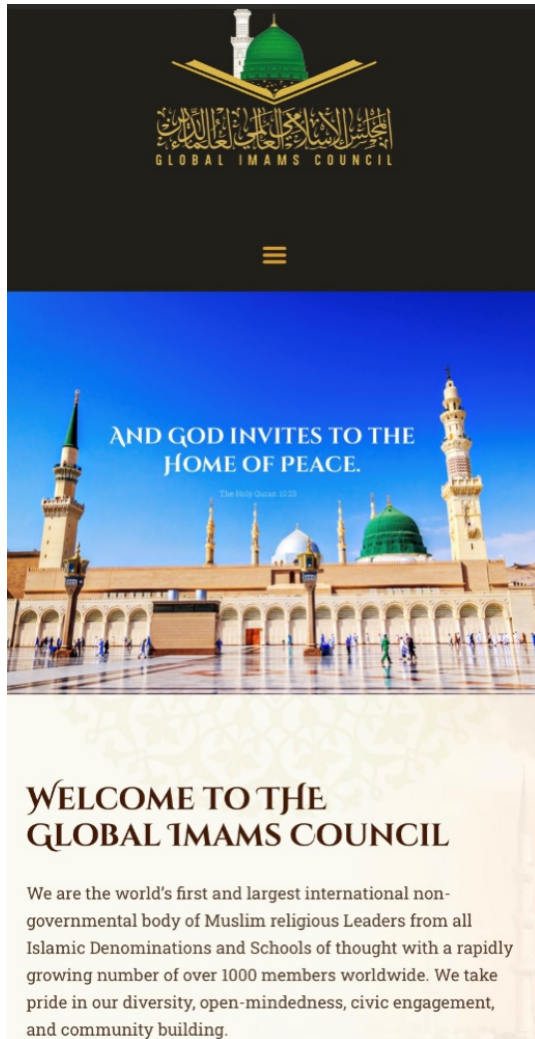
### **The Global Imams Council:**

*“We invite leading organizations of the Muslim world and all other Imams Councils to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and all examples underneath it.”<sup>1</sup>*

Pictured: Imam Mohammad Baqir al-Budairi, President of the Global Imams Council

## Background

### The Global Imams Council (GIC) in Bagdad Adopts the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism



The Governing Board of the Global Imams Council (GIC)<sup>2</sup> in Baghdad, Iraq, and its Senior Imam Committee voted unanimously this week to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism. The GIC general council and members worldwide then voted by an “overwhelming majority” in favour, according to a GIC press release on the matter.

The global campaign for the adoption of the IHRA definition has become a cornerstone effort in the battle against Jew-hatred.

It has been adopted by 34 countries to date including Canada. Albania and Bahrain joined the effort just this week as did the province of Ontario.

The GIC resolution was passed on October 26, 2020 and made effective on October 30, 2020. According to a GIC internal memo issued by GIC president, Imam Baqir al-Budairi, the “definition will be binding on all current and future members of the The Global Imams Council; including all affiliate Mosques, Centers, Institutes and

Organizations operated by the Imams of this council worldwide.”

With 1,300 imams serving more than 800 communities across 49 nations, the GIC is “the world’s first and largest international non-governmental body of Muslim faith leaders from all Islamic denominations and schools of thought,” according to their website.

## **A Statement from GIC President Imam al-Budairi:**

“The Global Imams Council is determined to strengthen the bridges of peace between Islam and all religions. We respect the beliefs and emotions of all people, and this is what makes us different from the Islamist extremists who have tarnished the image of our religion. Our Council has welcomed the invitation to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, and I am pleased to announce that our Council has done so through a successful and democratic referendum. We understand the importance of clerical presence in these peace developments....”<sup>3</sup>

### **Who is Imam al-Budairi?**

Imam Mohammad Baqir al-Budairi, is a prominent Islamic scholar and among the leading Imams in Baghdad, Iraq. He belongs to a family of revered faith leaders. His paternal grandfather, Grand Ayatollah Abdulzahra al-Budairi, established Baghdad’s contemporary Islamic Seminary: Al-Zahra Seminary for Religious Studies (1970), and had founded the iconic Sayiday Shabab Ahl-Aljanah Mosque in Baghdad in 1960. Both establishments are currently overseen by Al-Budairi’s father, Allamah Al-Budairi, who is also a notable scholar and the founding director of numerous educational and charity organizations in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>



→ In a statement, the GIC said that the adoption of the definition came after it received a letter from the office of U.S. Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism Elan Carr, calling on the council to do so, and after receiving requests from “influential and prominent members of the public who are concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism; and the importance of defining and combating this form of extremism which has led to terrorism.”<sup>5</sup>

→ “We live in a time of rising antisemitism and terrorist attacks, which makes our responsibility as faith leaders greater, and even greater as Imams,” GIC’s members stated, adding that they are “the first Imams Council in history to invite a rabbi to become a permanent member of its Interfaith board.”<sup>6</sup>

## C-CAT Assessment

### The Import of the Global Imams Council Vote

→ **Clerical Influence** is a Crucial Factor in the Battle Against Extremism: While the actions taken by state entities are obviously key milestones in the IHRA campaign, they are also limited by their political nature in an arena in which antisemitism as a global phenomenon is often driven by ideological and theological factors.

But this is a *clerical statement* by the first large Muslim *clerical body* to take this step, and the import of this vote cannot be overstated. Clerics in the Muslim world are a key political and cultural force with a very different level of credibility and influence both within, but also well beyond, political frameworks.

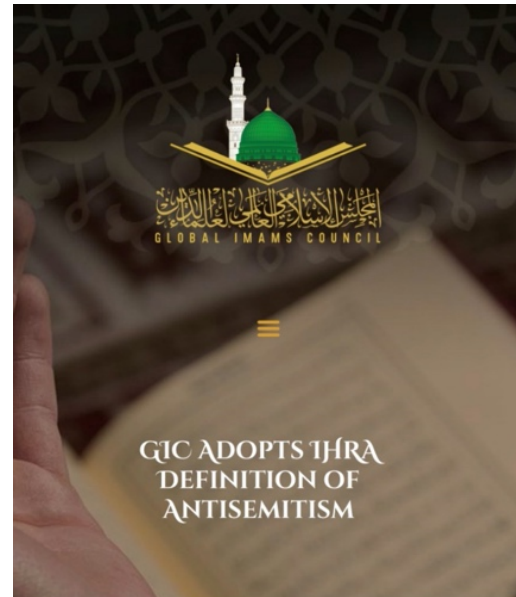
In particular clerical efforts like those of the GIC are **indispensable** in curtailing the influence of Islamist extremists, clerics and institutions who regularly and effectively dismiss and delegitimize state entities who oppose them, as enemies of the Muslim world fundamentally at odds with Islamic sensibilities.

→ **A Blow Against Islamist Antisemitism – a Global Super-spreader of Jew-hatred:**

Islamist antisemitism is at the very heart of the theology, strategies, and writings of extremist entities like the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wahhabis, and the Khomeinists of Iran. It is uncompromising, unrelenting and openly genocidal. For these groups that have tens of millions of adherents and sympathizers, antisemitism is neither a rhetorical tactic nor a secondary objective, but a *raison d'être*. It is a central organizing principle that animates and informs the worldview and policies of Iran's Islamic Revolution and fuels the onslaughts of terrorist groups that Islamism has spawned, tolerated, or actively supported.

Notably, Islamist antisemitism has demonstrated unique capacities as a “super-spreader” of Jew-hatred across the globe. Its canards have been adopted, amplified, and normalized by extremists on both ends of the political spectrum throughout western world. Islamist antisemitism is a key driver and catalyst of global antisemitism and is now being directly and unambiguously confronted by the GIC on an unprecedented institutional scale. This is likely to have significant impact both on the ground and throughout the political corridors of the Islamic world.

→ **A New Template:** The GIC's vote has created a new Islamic template that will open the door for other like-minded Muslim clerical institutions to join this effort against the depredations of Islamist extremism.



# APPENDIX

## The U.S. Department of State:

english.alarabiya.net

العربية

U.S. Envoy to Monitor a...  
@USEAntiSemitism

More big wins in our fight against #Antisemitism: the Global Imams Council has unanimously adopted @TheIHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Thank you to the world's largest NGO of #Muslim faith leaders for working with us to banish bigotry and build bridges of peace.

DOCUMENT NUMBER: GIC201029

29<sup>th</sup> of October 2020

GLOBAL IMAMS COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

*In the Name of God, Most Kind, Most Merciful*

The Global Imams Council is the world's first and largest international non-governmental body of Muslim faith leaders from all Islamic denominations and schools of thought. We are dedicated to establishing peace and harmony with all religious groups. Our blessed council, through its leading Imams, has a history of combating extremism and terrorism in all of its forms. We have taken a firm stance against Antisemitism in our declaration, and we are the first Imams Council in history to invite a Rabbi to become a permanent member to its Interfaith board.

In light of the current peace efforts being achieved throughout the Middle East, this Council received numerous requests to contribute to this development by adopting the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism* and all of the examples underneath it. The first suggestion was in the form of a letter from The Office of The U.S. Department of State's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and the second being from influential and prominent members of the public who are concerned about the rise of Antisemitism; and the importance of defining and combating this form of extremism which has led to terrorism.

On Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, The Global Imams Council's Governing Board, Senior Imams Committee and Advisory Committee passed a unanimous vote to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. This was followed by an overwhelming majority vote by the general council of Imams and our members worldwide. The adoption of the following definition of Antisemitism:

"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."

11:31 PM · Oct 30, 2020

## U.S. Deputy Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism

### Ellie Cohanim:

"I welcome the opportunity to work with you in achieving this landmark step that will pave the way for stronger Muslim-Jewish relations and help defeat anti-Semitism and hate worldwide."<sup>7</sup>



## The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs:



“Israel welcomes the important step by the Global Imams Council (GIC) in adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Religious leadership has an important role to play in marking a path for its believers, and the GIC leads the way in the struggle against antisemitism and in the building of bridges of peace and coexistence....”<sup>8</sup>

### **The Global imams Council (GIC):**

“We live in a time of rising antisemitism and terrorist attacks, which makes our responsibility as faith leaders greater, and even greater as Imams”<sup>9</sup>



(Oct. 30, 2020)

### **Michael Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer of B'nai Brith Canada**

“... Not only is the IHRA Definition a [consensus](#) issue in the Jewish community, but even mainstream Muslim organizations have adopted it this week – including the [Global Imams Council](#). In the last week alone, the Muslim-majority nations of [Albania](#) and [Bahrain](#) have also both adopted it. The [antisemitic] chants at July's rally are a vivid illustration of why the IHRA Definition is so important and why the lines of what constitutes antisemitism must not be blurred...”<sup>10</sup>

### **The Global Imams Council (GIC):**

“We invite leading organizations of the Muslim world and all other Imams Councils to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and all examples underneath it.”<sup>11</sup>



### Saudi-backed Al Arabiya



### European Jewish Congress



m.jpost.com

THE JERUSALEM POST

Jerusalem Post > Diaspora > Antisemitism

#### Global Imams Council adopts IHRA definition of antisemitism

By SARAH CHEMLA OCTOBER 30, 2020 22:50



Sheikh Zayed Mosque seen from the courtyard with its floral design. (photo credit: WIKIEMIRATI)

"We live in a time of rising antisemitism and terrorist attacks, which makes our responsibility as faith leaders greater, and even greater as Imams," the NGO said.



**Canadian Coalition Against Terror** @canstopterror · Oct 30  
Canadian Terror Victims Laud the Global Imam's Council in Baghdad for Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism



Canadian Terror Victims Laud Global Imam's Council Adoption of IHR...  
Eisen: "The Global Imam's Council has struck a blow against Islamist extremism and terrorism and the genocidal antisemitism which drives..."  
[c-catcanada.org](http://c-catcanada.org)

1 1

**Canadian Coalition Against Terror** @canstopterror · Oct 30  
C-CAT Founder Danny Eisen: "The Council has struck a blow against Islamist extremism and terrorism and the genocidal antisemitism which

Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies Incorporated (QJBD)

1d ·

The Global Imams Council (GIC) is the first Imams Council in the world to adopt the International Holocaust Remem... See More



IMAMS.ORG  
GIC Adopts IHRA Definition of Antisemitism  
|| Global Imams Council

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# GIC STATEMENT ON THE ADOPTION OF THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM:

DOCUMENT NUMBER: GICS011020



29<sup>th</sup> of October 2020

## PRESS RELEASE

*In the Name of God, Most Kind, Most Merciful*

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In light of the current peace efforts being achieved throughout the Middle East, this Council received numerous requests to contribute to this development by adopting the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism* and all of the examples underneath it. The first suggestion was in the form of a letter from The Office of The U.S. Department of State's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and the second being from influential and prominent members of the public who are concerned about the rise of Antisemitism; and the importance of defining and combating this form of extremism which has led to terrorism.

On Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, The Global Imams Council's Governing Board, Senior Imams Committee and Advisory Committee passed a unanimous vote to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. This was followed by an overwhelming majority vote by the general council of Imams and our members worldwide. The adoption of the following definition of Antisemitism:

“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.”

and all examples underneath it, by The Global Imams Council, will come into effect on Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2020.

This definition will be binding on all current and future members of The Global Imams Council; including all affiliate Mosques, Centers, Institutes and Organizations operated by the Imams of this council worldwide.

We ask the Almighty to bring together the hearts of the Children of Abraham and to strengthen the bridges of peace, harmony, understanding and mutual respect. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing.

The Global Imams Council

www.imams.org  
Kayarah Road, Baghdad, Republic of Iraq

HQ@imams.org

## GIC INTERNAL COUNCIL MEMO:

## Internal Memo



**To:** GLOBAL IMAMS COUNCIL; ADVISORY COMMITTEE, COUNCIL BOARD

**From:** IMAM BUDAIRI, PRESIDENT; SENIOR IMAMS COMMITTEE

**cc:** COUNCIL AMBASSADORS

**Date:** 29 OCTOBER 2020

**Re:** ADOPTION OF THE IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Dear Excellencies,

On Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, The Global Imams Council's Governing Board, Senior Imams Committee and Advisory Committee passed a unanimous vote to adopt the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism* and all examples underneath it. This was followed by an overwhelming majority vote by the general council of Imams and our members worldwide. The adoption of the following definition of Antisemitism:

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END.

Imam Mohammad Baqir al-Budairi  
President



## **ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://imams.org/news/gic-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://imams.org/news/gic-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/worlds-largest-imams-ngo-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism-647515>

<sup>4</sup> <https://imams.org/president/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jns.org/largest-ngo-of-imams-worldwide-adopts-universal-definition-of-antisemitism/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/worlds-largest-imams-ngo-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism-647515>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.jns.org/largest-ngo-of-imams-worldwide-adopts-universal-definition-of-antisemitism/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2020/Pages/Israel-welcomes-the-GIC-adoption-of-the-IHRA-definition-of-antisemitism-1-November-2020.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/worlds-largest-imams-ngo-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism-647515>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.bnaibrith.ca/setting\\_the\\_record\\_straight\\_on\\_the\\_ihra\\_definition\\_in\\_ontario](https://www.bnaibrith.ca/setting_the_record_straight_on_the_ihra_definition_in_ontario)

<sup>11</sup> <https://imams.org/news/gic-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>