

# Guide to Identifying Antisemitism in Debates about Israel

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- Mistaking political disagreements about Israel for antisemitism is counterproductive.
  - It diverts the debate away from the substance to whether something is – or is not – antisemitic.
  - It hinders policy debate about Israel.
  - It distracts from addressing real instances of antisemitism and bigotry.
  - Making your case on its merits is the most effective way to refute unfair criticism of Israel.
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## Be on the lookout for antisemitism. Here are some examples:

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- When criticism of Israel or Zionism **uses an antisemitic trope** that has historically been directed at Jews – it's antisemitic.
  - When Israel is used as a **surrogate term for Jews** – it's antisemitic.
  - When criticism **depicts Israel as having hidden power or control** – it's antisemitic.
  - When Israel is **criticized because of its Jewish character** – it's antisemitic.
  - When, based on their Jewish identity, Jews are **denied the same individual or national rights as others** – including the right to self-determination – it's antisemitic.
  - When Jews are held collectively responsible for Israel's policies or actions – it's antisemitic.
  - When criticism insinuates that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live/are citizens – it's antisemitic.
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## But don't confuse criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

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- **Criticism or disagreement with Israeli government policies is not antisemitic.**
  - Harsh characterizations of Israel that may be unfair are not necessarily antisemitic.
  - Even Yitzhak Rabin once warned that maintaining an occupation would lead to apartheid. He certainly wasn't an anti-semite.
  - **Non-violent actions that press for changes in Israeli policies are not generally antisemitic.**
  - Boycotting goods made in the West Bank and/or Israel is not antisemitic unless it specifically singles out Israel because of its Jewish character.
  - **Anti-Zionism can be antisemitic if it specifically denies the Jewish right to self-determination** or it employs an antisemitic trope.
  - **But opposition to Zionism in and of itself is not necessarily antisemitic.**
  - **Devoting special attention to Israel is not generally antisemitic.** Israel attracts special attention for many reasons: e.g., because it is at the crossroads of the three major Western religions or because the U.S. is Israel's closest ally and provides \$3.8 billion annually in aid to Israel.
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