



**How the United Nations Demonizes Israel
and Incentivizes Hamas**

**Written Testimony by Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director of United Nations Watch**

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**United Nations' Bigotry Towards Israel:
UNRWA Antisemitism Poisons Palestinian Youth**

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and International Organizations**

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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Wild, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify at this important hearing. My purpose today is to document how key United Nations bodies and officials have demonized Israel and incentivized Hamas, including in the aftermath of the Hamas massacre of October 7th. I would like to ask that my full statement be ordered part of the record.

Introduction

The United Nations was founded in wake of the Nazi atrocities, and this year marks the 75th anniversary of its adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was created, as stated in the Preamble, in response to “barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind.”

On October 7th, thousands of Hamas terrorists infiltrated from Gaza into Israel, broke into more than a dozen kibbutzim and other residential communities, and massacred entire families, committing horrific and sadistic acts, including mutilation, rape and torture. More than 1,400 Israelis were killed.

U.S. President Joe Biden said, “there are moments in this life, when pure, unadulterated evil is unleashed on this world. The people of Israel lived through one such moment this weekend. This was an act of sheer evil.”

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said that “the attacks in Israel last weekend shocked the world. Over 1,400 people murdered, one by one. Over 3,500 wounded. Almost 200 taken hostage. The elderly men, women, children, babies in arms – murdered, mutilated, burned alive. We should call it by its name: it was a pogrom.”

Indeed, in wake of the Nazi-like atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7th, one would expect the United Nations to likewise speak clearly in denouncing these barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind. Yet this is not happening. While there were several initial condemnations of the Hamas massacre, the vast majority of statements by UN bodies and officials over the past month have, expressly or by implication, instead condemned Israel. Often, this is done by misstating basic facts, such as by falsely accusing Israel of bombing a hospital where the culprit was the Islamic Jihad.

Background

UN bias against Israel has a long history. While the United Nations Charter guarantees “the equal rights of nations large and small,” beginning in the 1960s, the full weight of the world body was gradually but deliberately turned against the country it helped to conceive by General Assembly resolution a mere two decades earlier.

The campaign at the UN to demonize and delegitimize Israel at every opportunity, which spawned the infamous 1975 UNGA resolution declaring Zionism to be a form of racism, was initiated by the Arab and Islamic states in concert with the Soviet Union, and supported by an automatic majority of dictatorships. Too often, many European and other democracies also join the jackals.¹

¹ See the UN Watch Database for updated resolution texts and country voting data concerning the UN’s demonization of Israel: <https://unwatch.org/database/>.

Many of the UN's political organs, specialized agencies, and bureaucratic divisions have been subverted by a relentless propaganda war targeting the Jewish state, causing them to stray from their founding purposes.

As shown below, UN bodies routinely apply double standards to Israel not expected of other democratic countries, singling out the world's only Jewish state for opprobrium in a way that is wholly disproportionate to its deficiencies.

UN human rights officials such as Navi Pillay, Craig Mokhiber and Francesca Albanese have claimed that the State of Israel is a racist endeavor, drawn comparisons of current Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, or accused Israel of "genocide." Under the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), adopted by 39 UN member states, it is clear that the actions of numerous UN bodies and officials are antisemitic in effect if not intent.²

General Assembly

Although the "Zionism is Racism" resolution was repealed in 1991, thanks to US efforts and the fall of the Soviet Union, its spirit is sadly very much alive throughout many UN bodies. At the General Assembly, each year there are more condemnations against Israel than on the rest of the world combined. In 2022, for example, there was one resolution each to criticize Iran, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, and the U.S., for its embargo on Cuba. Exceptionally, because of the war in Ukraine, there were six resolutions last year on Russia. The total of all these is 13. Yet on Israel alone, the GA passed 15 condemnatory resolutions.³ Not a single UNGA resolution was introduced on the human rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Turkey, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Qatar, Vietnam, Algeria, or 175 other countries.

On October 27th, the UN General Assembly adopted an Arab-drafted resolution calling for a "humanitarian truce" in Gaza, after rejecting a Canadian amendment that would have condemned the October 7th massacre by Hamas and demanded immediate release of hostages taken by Hamas. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 120 to 14 with 45 abstentions.

Outrageously, the resolution failed to condemn Hamas for its October 7th massacre of 1400 Israelis, or for its abduction of more than 200 Israelis including children and babies, or even to mention the word Hamas. The resolution also failed to recognize Israel's right to defend itself and its citizens against terrorism.

Rather than commend Israel for making great efforts to alert Gaza civilians to move out of harm's way—the opposite of how Hamas acted against Israeli civilians—the UNGA called on Israel, which it called "the occupying power," to rescind its order to evacuate northern Gaza.

² <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

³ <https://unwatch.org/2022-2023-unga-resolutions-on-israel-vs-rest-of-the-world>

World Health Organization and Other UN Humanitarian Agencies

The purpose of the World Health Organization (WHO), a multi-billion dollar agency in Geneva, is “the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.” Yet every year, the WHO’s annual assembly deviates from its focus on global public health in order to hold a special debate singling out Israel.

In May 2021, the WHO passed a resolution—co-sponsored by Cuba, Libya, Pakistan, Qatar, Syria, Turkey and Venezuela—which falsely implied that Israel had a “discriminatory” vaccine distribution plan.⁴ In that year, out of 34 items on the assembly’s agenda, only one focused on a specific country: Israel. There was no agenda item or resolution on any other country, conflict, civil war or political impasse—not on Syria, where hospitals and other medical infrastructure were repeatedly bombed by Syrian and Russian forces; not on war-torn Yemen, where millions are in dire need of health assistance; and not on Venezuela, where the health system is in a state of collapse and seven million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Since October 7th, the vast majority of statements by the WHO and its director have targeted Israel, expressly or by implication. Hamas is seldom mentioned. The same is true regarding statements by numerous other UN humanitarian agencies such as OCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNHCR, and of course UNRWA.

Dr. Tedros has posted numerous statements falsely implying that Israel targets hospitals or other healthcare facilities. The WHO director fails to tell the truth that Israel’s military tries very hard to avoid harming civilians, while Hamas’ strategy is to embed itself next to hospitals, homes, mosques and schools, in order to use Gaza civilians as human shields.

For example, on October 17th, Dr. Tedros rushed to “strongly condemn the attack on Al Ahli Arab Hospital in north Gaza....Early reports indicate hundreds of deaths and injuries.” He called for Israel’s evacuation order of the area to be reversed, and ended with the hashtag, “#NotATarget.”

In truth, Israel never attacked that hospital, and there were no hundreds killed. The United States, France, the United Kingdom and Canada all concluded that their own intelligence sources confirmed Israel’s analysis which showed that the cause of the explosion was a failed rocket launch from within Gaza by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Dr. Tedros never corrected his false accusation, and never deleted the tweet.

Likewise, this week, on Monday, November 6th, Dr. Tedros posted a call for a ceasefire, in a joint statement with heads of other UN agencies such as OCHA, WFP, OHCHR and UN Women, without any mention of the word Hamas. Israel’s right to self-defence, and its duty to protect the right to life of its people by stopping Hamas from carrying out its stated intention to repeat the massacre of October 7th, was nowhere mentioned.

⁴ <https://unwatch.org/who-meeting-deviates-from-covid-19-to-single-out-israel-as-violator-of-health-rights-2/>

UNRWA Indoctrinates Palestinian Youth, Incites Antisemitism and Terrorism

Teachers and schools at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which runs education and social services for Palestinians, regularly call to murder Jews, and create teaching materials that glorify terrorism, encourage martyrdom, demonize Israelis and incite antisemitism.⁵

For example, UNRWA Lebanon teacher Elham Mansour, posted this on Facebook: *“By Allah, anyone who can kill and slaughter any Zionist and Israeli criminal, and doesn’t do so, doesn’t deserve to live. Kill them and pursue them everywhere, they are the greatest enemy. All Israel deserves is death.”*⁶

In 2022 alone, UNRWA received \$344 million in U.S. funding. Yet a March 2023 report by UN Watch and Impact-SE identified 133 UNRWA educators and staff who were found to promote hate and violence on social media, and an additional 82 teachers and other staff affiliated with 30 UNRWA schools who were involved in drafting and distributing hateful content to students. The hatred is systemic at UNRWA, and its internal self-auditing mechanisms are not fit for purpose.⁷ UNRWA’s strategy is to smear groups such as UN Watch that hold them to account, and Western donor states have apparently made no objections.

UN Watch has examined how UNRWA staff reacted to the Hamas massacre of October 7th. Our new report, “Hate Begins Here” (*see unwatch.org*) shows that as soon as news of the horrific slaughter broke, which was livestreamed on social media by some of the terrorists, UNRWA staff immediately celebrated and justified it on Facebook:

- UNRWA Gaza teacher Osama Ahmed posted “Allah is Great, Allah is Great, reality surpasses our wildest dreams.”
- UNRWA principal Iman Hassan justified the massacre as “restoring rights” and “redressing” Palestinian “grievances.”
- Rawia Helles, Director of the Khan Younis Training Center and featured in an UNRWA video, glorified one of the terrorists as a “hero,” “raider,” and “prince of Khan Younis.”
- UNRWA English Teacher Asmaa Rafiq Kuheil excitedly called to “sculpture the date,” adding a heart emoji.
- UNRWA School Administrator Hmada Ahmed posted, “welcome the great October.”

Human Rights Council

The UN’s Human Rights Council was created in 2006 to replace its discredited predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. Comprised of a rotating membership of 47 member states, the Council is the highest body in the UN human rights system.

⁵ <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Report-UNRWA.pdf>

⁶ See UN Watch, *UNRWA’s Teachers of Hate*, June 2022, at 17 <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022-Report-UNRWAs-Teachers-of-Hate.pdf>.

⁷ <https://unwatch.org/un-teachers-call-to-murder-jews-reveals-new-report/>

Contrary to its declared purposes, the Council has systematically turned a blind eye to most of the world's worst perpetrators of gross and systematic violations of human rights. Paradoxically, many of these violators sit on the Council, two-thirds of which is composed of non-democracies. Current members include China, Cuba, Qatar, Vietnam and Pakistan.

None of these regimes has ever been condemned in any council resolution, emergency session or fact-finding mission. The Council has failed to fulfil its core mission of addressing the world's most urgent violations, and it has failed to act, as mandated by its own founding text, Resolution 60/251, with "universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity." Nowhere is this chasm between promise and performance more pronounced than in the Council's pathological obsession with Israel. As described below, its selective treatment of Israel is a gross breach of its obligation to act "without distinction of any kind" and "in a fair and equal manner."

Meanwhile, last week, the Islamic Republic of Iran was made Chair of the U.N. Human Rights Council Social Forum.⁸

Standing Agenda Item Targeting Israel

The only country in the world with a standing agenda item at the Human Rights Council is not North Korea, a totalitarian regime that holds 100,000 people in gulags, nor is it Syria which has gassed its own people. It is Israel. The day after it was instituted, then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon criticized this act of selectivity. On 20 June 2007, Mr. Ban "voiced disappointment at the Council decision to single out Israel as the only specific regional item on its agenda, given the range and scope of allegations of human rights violations throughout the world."⁹ To protest its bias, most Western democracies do not participate in the debates held under this agenda item.

Resolutions Targeting Israel

From its creation in June 2006 to June 2023, the Council has adopted zero resolutions on serial human rights abusers such as China, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Zimbabwe and Cuba. It adopted 2 condemnatory resolutions on Sudan, 3 on Venezuela, 12 on Eritrea, 14 on Iran, 16 on North Korea, 42 on Syria — and 103 on Israel. Whatever its flaws, there is no rational explanation why the Jewish state should be the object of more condemnations than Iran, Syria and North Korea combined. The numbers alone reveal the UN's irrational obsession with one nation. Even those who consider Israel deserving of criticism cannot dispute that this amounts to an extreme case of selective prosecution.

Beyond the numbers, what makes the resolutions on Israel different from virtually every other country-specific resolution is that they are suffused with political hyperbole, selective reporting, and the systematic suppression of any countervailing facts that might provide balance in background information or context. By contrast, even the council's resolutions on the former Sudanese regime of Omar al-Bashir regularly included language praising, commending, and urging international aid funds

⁸ To see how the Iranian regime chaired this UN human rights forum, see

<https://twitter.com/HillelNeuer/status/1720172790295281889>

⁹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2007/06/223082-secretary-general-welcomes-agreement-details-un-human-rights-review>

for its government.¹⁰ The practice of singling out Israel — not only with a disproportionate amount of resolutions, but with language that is uniquely condemnatory — constantly reinforces the impression that there is nothing whatsoever to be said in Israel's favor. The effect is to stigmatize the nation as evil.

Inquisition, Not Inquiry: The Pillay Commission

The Council has created nine fact-finding missions or inquiries targeting Israel, more than on any other country.¹¹ These have all come with predetermined verdicts that effectively deny Israel's right to self-defense. Their skewed reports grant propaganda victories to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, incentivizing the terrorists to continue launching wars.¹² In May 2021, after Palestinian terrorists from Hamas and Islamic Jihad fired 4,000 rockets at Israeli civilian centers, the Council created its first open-ended Commission of Inquiry targeting Israel. It is the first with no end date. Rather, it is mandated to report to the UN twice a year, in perpetuity. Its scope includes not only the war of May 2021, but all events leading up to it, and since. They have the unprecedented mandate to examine "root causes" of the conflict, including alleged "systematic discrimination" based on race. The inquiry has a large staff of lawyers tasked with collecting evidence admissible in international tribunals, with a budget of millions of dollars a year.

The Council deliberately appointed three commissioners with records of extreme bias against Israel, in open violation of UN rules that they be impartial. For example, the Chair of the inquiry, Navi Pillay, has signed petitions lobbying governments to "Sanction Apartheid Israel." Weeks after the May 2021 Hamas-Israel war, Pillay signed a letter to President Biden calling to punish Israel as the culpable party. UN Watch documented her bias in a legal request that she recuse herself, but this was ignored.¹³

In the summer of 2022, in an interview with the anti-Israel publication *Mondoweiss*, commissioner Miloon Kothari ranted about "the Jewish lobby" and questioned Israel's right to be a member of the UN.¹⁴ He was condemned by numerous countries and top UN officials for antisemitism,¹⁵ yet he has remained in his post. In June 2023, Kothari complained that the Western media was "an obstacle" to his work, and of "biased reporting" by the BBC, New York Times, and Washington Post, "and there are many others, almost verging towards fake news," he said.¹⁶

Officials of the Human Rights Council

The anti-Israel campaign described above is initiated by UN member states, namely, those belonging to the Arab, Islamic, and Non-Aligned blocs. Separately, however, several independent officials in the UN human rights system have demonstrated a similar prejudice.

¹⁰ See examples at <https://unwatch.org/database/>.

¹¹ <https://unwatch.org/un-rights-council-calls-9th-urgent-session-on-israel/>

¹² <https://unwatch.org/renowned-law-of-war-expert-geoffrey-corn-testifies-against-biased-un-report/>

¹³ <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Request-for-Navi-Pillay-to-Recuse-Herself-on-Grounds-of-Bias.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://unwatch.org/un-commissioner-miloon-kothari-denounced-for-antisemitic-remarks-full-transcript/>

¹⁵ <https://unwatch.org/the-compendium-of-world-condemnations-of-antisemitic-un-investigator-miloon-kothari>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/HillelNeuer/status/1671162885178032131>

Francesca Albanese

In March 2022, the Council appointed Francesca Albanese, an Italian lawyer who worked for UNRWA, as its “Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories,” whose mandate is actually to investigate solely “Israel’s violations.”

While UN experts are obliged to be objective and impartial, UN Watch revealed — prior to her appointment — that Albanese had repeatedly equated Palestinian suffering with the Nazi Holocaust, and accused Israel of apartheid, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes.¹⁷ It was also later revealed that she fundraised for UNRWA in 2014 by writing that America is “subjugated by the Jewish lobby.”¹⁸

On her application, Albanese was asked whether she holds “any views or opinions that could prejudice the manner in which the candidate discharges the mandate.” She replied “No.” Yet a year prior, Albanese had acknowledged the opposite, saying her “deeply held personal views” on the Palestinian issue “could compromise my objectivity.”¹⁹

Since taking up her UN post, Albanese has legitimized terrorism²⁰, encouraged Hamas “resistance” while addressing one of their conferences²¹, and praised antisemites like Roger Waters.²²

Craig Mokhiber

Craig Mokhiber is Director of the New York branch of the UN’s Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and has served in various capacities at the United Nations since 1992. On his public Twitter and Facebook accounts, Mokhiber has repeatedly accused Israel of the worst possible crimes: “genocide,” “ethnic cleansing,” and “large-scale atrocities.”²³ He accuses Israel of “racist domination,” “racist violence,” and “racist oppression,” as well as of committing “right-wing white ethno-nationalist terrorism” that “is murdering people.” In Mokhiber’s view, Israel’s policies toward the Middle East peace process, as expressed by the U.S. peace plan, amount to “the crimes of the 20th Century,” including “ethno-nationalism,” “apartheid,” “colonialism,” “racism,” and “subjugation.” Mokhiber is notably silent about any actions against Israelis, whether by Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Iran or the Palestinian Authority.

Reaction to October Massacre

In wake of the October 7th Hamas massacre, the key UN human rights officials cited above have systematically condemned Israel and effectively sought to deny it the right to self-defense. Both Albanese and Mokhiber spread the blood libel that Israel was preparing a “genocide” against the Palestinians.²⁴

¹⁷ <https://unwatch.org/report-un-to-name-investigator-on-israel-who-compares-it-to-nazi-germany/>

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/HillelNeuer/status/1602909007924035586>

¹⁹ See UN Watch, *Mandate to Discriminate, Part II*, at 15-18, <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Mandate-to-Discriminate-Part-II.pdf>.

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/HillelNeuer/status/1556755829277310976>

²¹ <https://twitter.com/UNWatch/status/1598529068340690944>

²² <https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/1666907933039312896>

²³ <https://unwatch.org/exposed-top-human-rights-official-craig-mokhiber-deep-seated-anti-israel-bias/>

²⁴ See UN Watch’s analysis of “UN reactions to Hamas massacre and its aftermath” at <https://unwatch.org/un-officials-and-bodies-react-to-october-2023-hamas-massacre-and-its-aftermath/>

Pillay's inquiry issued a report in October 2023 that falsely accused Israel of multiple war crimes, minimized Israel's security needs, refuses to acknowledge the existence of Palestinian terrorism, blamed Palestinian violence on Israel, and sanitized it by calling it "protests for self-determination." This report was written before the massacre. Yet in an October 16th [press release](#), the Pillay inquiry referred to "the atrocities we have witnessed since 7 October" without naming any perpetrators. The statement went on to imply that Hamas and Israel are equally guilty of targeting civilians. The inquiry created a false moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas, again refusing to treat Hamas as a terrorist organization, and again refusing to affirm Israel's right to self-defense.

Conclusion

On the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, key officials of the United Nations are twisting human rights to incentivize terrorist groups such as Hamas to continue to seek maximum civilian casualties among their own people. Key UN bodies are failing to live up to their own principles, and are being wilfully and systematically misused by an organized campaign to demonize and delegitimize Israel and the Jewish people. In wake of one of the most horrific mass terrorist attacks of our time, the United Nations has failed to show moral clarity. On the contrary, noble principles such as human rights, equality, and peace are being subverted by gross discrimination, politicization, and prejudice. The United Nations will never live up to its founding promise so long as this pathology endures.