
UN Human Rights Council
34th Session, Item 1 – March 1, 2017

General Segment

Delivered by Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter,
Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN in Geneva

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to formally congratulate you, on assuming the Presidency of the Human Rights Council for the year 2017. We look forward to working with you and the rest of the Bureau.

Mr. President,

the past year was marked by a further deterioration in the Human Rights around the world. And yet, a significant part of this Council's attention has been put in the service of political ends, particularly one: that of attacking Israel.

"Decades of political maneuverings have created a disproportionate volume of resolutions, reports and conferences criticizing Israel". Mr. President, these are not my words, but those of Ban Ki-moon, looking back on his tenure as Secretary-General. This important observation may not have mended the damage that had already been done. But it does prove that Israel is not alone in acknowledging the deep-rooted bias of the United Nations, and of this Council in particular.

More than ten years after its establishment, the Council still compulsively devotes, especially in March, a specific discussion on Israel, as if it belongs to a different category of states.

Two days ago, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in this very Chamber that "*The integrity and credibility of this Council will only be enhanced by proceeding in a manner that avoids unbalanced treatments of Member States.*" (end of quote).

This attitude of the Council does nothing for the advancement of human rights or to the Peace Process. On the contrary! In perpetuating this discriminatory practice, this Council has fallen victim to the same extreme politicization that led to the dissolution of its predecessor. If we do not want the Council to end up like the Commission, now it is time to halt this masquerade. I therefore call on States to refrain from participating in the immoral Item 7 discussions and mechanisms.

Mr. President,

The truth is that Israel is a strong democracy and a valuable member of the International Community. The Israeli strong legal system and our Supreme Court guarantee that the State of Israel will always uphold its obligations and act accordingly.

Israel has managed to remain committed to Human Rights in the face of ongoing challenges, waves of terrorism and wars.

Mr. President,

Israel is committed to achieving Peace with the Palestinians, as we did with our neighboring countries, Egypt and Jordan. This must be done, as before, by direct negotiations. We need to hear statements against incitement and cultivation of hatred against Israel. It is time to take responsibility for promoting Peace and a genuine dialogue, instead of focusing on blaming Israel and using the UN forums for one-sided resolutions and reports through an automatic majority.

This is why it is so crucial that the Council ends its mistreatment of Israel. Because for the time being, and as the former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said “this reality has hampered the ability of the UN to fulfill its role effectively”.

Thank you.