
UN Human Rights Council
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Adoption of Resolution Item 2

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Madame President,

The Covid 19 pandemic has revealed much about the weakness of United Nations multilateralism in times of crisis. Saving lives demands increased collaboration, greater empathy and less conflict.

In light of that imperative, Israel undertook major efforts to facilitate cooperation with the Palestinian Authority to prevent the spread of the disease, including the delivery of Covid-19 related medical supplies and training of medical teams. Palestinians working in Israel received all necessary means by their employers to keep Covid-19 restrictions and return to unite with their families during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. This good cooperation and coordination on the ground was commended by the UN SG and his envoy to the Middle East, Mr. Meladanov. The Palestinian representatives here, however, choose to ignore the facts, keep up with their narrative of the victim – as they have for the past 72 years.

Let me remind you today, as I am reaching my end of term here, that the United Nations called for the creation of two States in November 1947. The UN resolution was accepted by the Jewish side and rejected by the Arab side. The Arab effort to deny and destroy the Jewish State started immediately – and for some, has never ceased.

How did Israel respond to non-stop existential threats posed by xenophobia and antisemitism? It built a modern country, a start-up nation, a dynamic and pluralist society, a strong democracy imbued with the rule of law and protection for individual rights, including those of religious minorities. A country that yearns for peace with its neighbors.

Our hope for peace was met twice, by Egypt and Jordan. This shows that longtime enemies can become partners when there is sincere will to sit side-by-side and conduct direct dialogue. I was a young diplomat in the 90s who had the privilege of serving in our newly established embassy in Amman, Jordan. I was a mother of three young children then and truly believed that the children are the key to break psychological barriers and that through direct daily contact and education for peace we can mutually win hearts and mind. I could see how this “people to people” interaction, on all levels had yielded fruit, which I call: Tamar a-Salam, the fruit of Peace.

I know that many Palestinians see it eye to eye and want the same.

But the fact is – demonstrated over and over at the UN Human Rights Council and across the UN system – Palestinian leadership and its representatives prefer victimhood to peace, PR stunts to truth, blame-games to taking responsibility either for what has been or what could be.

By contrast, the Jewish people, which suffered an unprecedented genocide, rose from the ashes of the Holocaust. Though we never forgot, we moved forward together for the sake of our children and our children's children.

Madame President,

This Council has one agenda item designed to condemn only one state. This item 7 is nothing but a systematic mechanism of discrimination against Israel and Israelis, one deeply rooted in the culture of this Council and of some of its member states.

One special rapporteur with a never-ending mandate – to condemn the Jewish state.

Let's call Item 7 by its proper name, the item of institutionalized antisemitism.

Israel is a strong democracy. We have robust legal institutions. We understand that accepting criticism is part of responsible world citizenship. So we have built and maintained accountability mechanisms. We ensure that our civil society has the tools to exercise public scrutiny. These are real facts – except for the practitioners licensed to speak at this Council under the guise of human rights. Spreading false narratives and avoiding taking responsibility is not the path the Palestinians should be taking to promote their cause.

Madam President,

My experience as an Israeli diplomat for three decades includes - as I mentioned above and through my prior position as DDG for Middle East Affairs - many opportunities to engage in extensive efforts at dialogue and reconciliation with many throughout the Middle East. I have experienced how human interactions and respectful dialogue can create opportunities for addressing grievances and resolving conflict.

The damage created by this politicized Council has unfortunately spread into other human rights mechanisms, and has tainted their work significantly. By preparing and publishing an unprecedented blacklist of companies, the Office of the High Commissioner has turned itself into an active participant in the singling out of Israel. OHCHR also assisted Mr. Lynk in organizing a few dozens of Special Rapporteurs, supposed to be independent mandate holders, to attack Israel unilaterally through a press release. So many among them, that don't have any connection or expertise on the topic reflect the abuse of their mandate and the cynicism towards those who seek their help.

Let me remind you that over the past four years the Israeli Mission in Geneva presented 3 national reports to human rights treaty bodies, underwent its third Universal Periodic Review, and actively engaged in resolutions designed to promote and protect human rights on a variety of issues. We have shared our know-how and development tools, in the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and leaving no-one behind. Israel never stopped engaging with professionalism and openness with Human Rights mechanisms and member states, but we refuse to tolerate to be unfairly treated, singled out and discriminated against.

Let me conclude by saying that you are dealing with a conflict involving the rights of two peoples, not one. A conflict involving the suffering of two peoples, not one. These kind of conflicts need a direct negotiation process that brings peoples together rather than more recriminations of this Council that only serve to pull our peoples farther apart. We have enough of that!

I hope and pray, that we will find a sustainable compromise and enjoy better days ahead at home and in our region, despite your efforts, and not because of them.

Thank you Madam President.