
UN Human Rights Council
44th Session, 15 July 2020

Item 9 – ID with the SR on racism

Madam President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her last report, to which Israel contributed. We hope she continues to focus on this kind of activities, in accordance with her mandate.

As Rabbi Abraham Heschel, a known friend of Martin Luther King, Jr., said: “racism is man’s gravest threat to man, the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason, the maximum of cruelty for a minimum of thinking”.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has become the background for a renewed wave of this hatred, where the Jews and Israel are once again used as scapegoats.

Anti-Semitic propaganda has dominated various online and offline platforms, accusing the Jews of spreading the disease to disrupt the world economy or profit from the potential vaccine.

Similarly, religious leaders in the Arab world, pro-BDS groups and even official state media in countries, such as Iran, have exploited the virus to defame Israel, claiming that Israel developed it to eliminate Palestinians, or that it is a Zionist plot aimed at reducing the Muslim population worldwide.

Madam President,

As long as Jews and other minorities are seen as “the other”, generalized and demonized, exclusion and violence will continue to infect our societies. The very nature of the challenges posed by the pandemic begs for solidarity and brotherhood – which are only crippled by the rejection of human diversity.

Israel calls for urgent efforts to eliminate racism and antisemitism, through embracing diversity, educating about past crimes of racists and Nazis, and eradicating expressions of hate incitement and denialism.

Thank you, Madam President.