
World Health Organization
WHA 71 – 23 May 2018

Committee B (A71/27)

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

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to restate Israel's clear position, which sees any assistance given to the Palestinians to improve their technical and medical capacity most favorably.

Although we have heard this parade of one-sided and false accusations, let me emphasize that we not only facilitate assistance, but also have joint projects and cooperation.

Today, however, as in every year, this professional forum is being exploited for political maneuverings at the expense of millions in need of health assistance. The only result of today's discussion and the decision before you is unfortunately a waste of the time, resources and credibility of the WHO.

Last year already, a professional report prepared by an official WHO delegation to the Golan Heights was shelved due to Syrian, yes – I repeat – SYRIAN pressure. This shameful abdication to a regime, which gases its own people was without any doubt a low point for this multilateral forum. Let alone what we've heard from the Syrian regime representative today. Indeed shameful.

And this year, again, the only country-focused item on the agenda is being brought before us in Committee B, of all places, the committee dedicated to budgetary and planning issues. As we face an overwhelming agenda and call for better efficiency and prioritization in the WHO, we still waste hours on a discussion which is totally political and contributes nothing.

So I ask you – What are we doing here?

Listening to the Palestinian representative about those who politicize this forum... Isn't it ridiculous?

The truth is that with or without this decision, the Palestinians have their own WHO office – as has been said, resource allocation and health cluster under the Health Emergencies Program. This program is completely unaffected by this discussion. The WHO office to the Palestinians serves as the main channel of information for the report before us. No input from Israel was included in this report, which demonstrates its partial and biased nature.

Despite this, Israel tried to cooperate and find common ground:

- We tried to have this discussion moved to the Health Emergencies Program agenda item, where it belongs, but we were turned away.
- We tried to remove the political elements and keep the draft decision technical and focused on assistance to the Palestinians, but we were refused.
- We tried to introduce a sunset clause to this never-ending story, but we were rejected.

As always, it seems that we apply one set of standards for Israel and another set of standards for everyone else.

This agenda item is meant for nothing but spreading anti-Israel lies and ludicrous accusations. It is aggravating to see that this forum does not reach out to those who really need it. It is especially saddening for the Syrian people, who are still denied life-saving humanitarian assistance, or the people of Yemen, where thousands are dying of cholera, or another Ebola outbreak threatening the people in the DRC.

I therefore take this opportunity to call all of you present here today to set the right priorities and stop the constant politicization of the WHO.

Let's WALK THE TALK. Apply the same standards to this agenda item as you would to any other.

We object this proposal and urge you to vote against it. I therefore call for a roll call vote.

Thank you.