



**NONE SHALL
BE AFRAID**
FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitism at the United Nations

B'nai B'rith has led Jewish engagement at the U.N. from its very inception in San Francisco in 1945. Sadly, the global body that was built upon the ashes of the Holocaust has, for much of its history, not served as a true ally to the Jewish community in combating anti-Semitism. Indeed, far too often, the U.N. has been a forum where this hatred festers.

The U.N. gave Zionism added legitimacy by voting for the creation of a Jewish state in 1947, but since that high point, the body has relentlessly and obsessively demonized the democratic nation-state of the Jewish people. In 1975, the General Assembly passed a resolution that stated that Zionism, the movement for self-determination of the Jewish people in our ancient homeland, was a form of racism. This notorious resolution stayed on the books until 1991 when – after much effort – it was rescinded.

Although rescinded, the Zionism-is-Racism resolution lives on in spirit at the U.N. In 2001, a U.N. conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, devolved into an anti-Semitic hatefest, with shocking street demonstrations, an official document that unfairly singled out Israel and an NGO outcome document that resurrected the Zionism-is-racism lie. This conference is one of the drivers that launched the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement a few years later.

The main force of the anti-Semitic nature of deliberations at the U.N. is the double standard that is always applied to Israel and the special, obsessive mistreatment that Israel receives. The General Assembly annually passes around 20 resolutions harshly condemning Israel, whereas actual human rights abusers like Iran will perhaps be the focus of one resolution a year (and that resolution does not easily pass). The Human Rights Council (UNHRC) features a permanent agenda item dedicated solely to censuring Israel, whereas all other member states are examined under a different item. The UNHRC recently demanded that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – even though it was not within the office's competence – create a database of companies doing business in territories that Israel captured in the defensive Six-Day War of 1967. No similar database has ever existed for another disputed territory, and it is difficult to imagine that one ever will.

Finally, there are a number of bureaucratic organs at the U.N. dedicated to promoting Palestinians' political narrative, including a non-existent "right of return" through which Palestinians hope to flood Israel with descendants of Arabs who departed during the Arab war on the country in 1948, thus ending Israel as a Jewish state. This "right" has never been applied to another refugee setting, and the U.N. continues to allow Palestinians descended from those who left in 1948 to claim refugee status, unlike descendants of all other refugees, who cannot inherit the status.

The situation at the U.N. is dire, but not hopeless. There are friends of Israel who vote against the biased resolutions, despite the fact that there is an automatic majority working against Israel. Successive secretaries-general have had constructive relationships with B'nai B'rith and with Israel and have spoken out against anti-Semitism. Sixty years after World War II ended, the U.N. finally passed resolutions on Holocaust remembrance and Holocaust denial, creating a Holocaust education program at the U.N. and an international day of commemoration for the victims of the genocide.

To learn more about B'nai B'rith's U.N. advocacy for the global Jewish community and Israel, [click here](#).



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