



B' N A I B' R I T H I N T E R N A T I O N A L

The Most Reverend Justin Welby
Lambeth Palace
London

Dear Archbishop:

As representatives of the world's oldest and most widely known Jewish communal and humanitarian organization – an organization profoundly committed both to interreligious bridge-building and to peace and coexistence between Israelis and Arabs – we were deeply disturbed by your August 2 statement on the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Israel's presence in Palestinian-claimed territories.

While saying that international law has long “been applied and upheld in a selective manner,” your statement actively “welcomed” the ICJ opinion – the result of a request by a political body, the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA), in which Arab and other autocratic states wield an automatic majority and which yearly condemns Israel more than all other 192 countries combined.

The request by the UNGA singled out alleged Israeli misdeeds for scrutiny, and found Israel guilty in advance. The judges on the U.N. court – presided over by a justice failing to recuse himself despite his career as a senior official of a country in a state of war with Israel, and that continues to deny its legitimate existence – rubber-stamped that blinkered view.

During a period when practically the entirety of the citizenry of Israel – Jews, Muslims, Druze and Christians alike – are facing unrelenting, harrowing violence and a grave existential threat by the ideological fanatics of Iran and its proxies, we are stunned by a statement that fails to acknowledge any of this, censuring only the world's sole Jewish state, the Middle East's sole pluralistic democracy, as responsible for “systemic discrimination” and denying neighbors’ “dignity, freedom and hope.”

Archbishop, Palestinians have repeatedly been offered – most sweepingly in 1947, 2000 and 2008 – statehood and virtually all the territory their more mainstream political leaders claim to seek. Whether in 1978, 1994 or 2020, Israel has also eagerly established bilateral relations and cooperation with every willing Arab and Muslim country, even at risk and sacrifice.

In 2000, Israel withdrew unilaterally and fully from a previous security zone along its border with Lebanon. In 2005, Israel withdrew unilaterally and completely from the Gaza Strip – including every single Jewish civilian settlement.

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Yet the cross-border terrorism and threats by Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad – all doctrinally sworn to Israel's total destruction – have only intensified, dramatically, culminating in the atrocities of last October 7, the most horrific bloodletting among Jewish innocents since the Holocaust.

Israel does not seek “death to Iran” – yet the Iranian regime openly and ritually pledges “death to Israel.” Israel harbors no hostility toward or territorial disputes whatsoever with Lebanon or Yemen, but the former is dominated by a military-caliber Hezbollah and the latter is overwhelmingly occupied by the Houthis – whose official flag proclaims “death to Israel” and “curse upon the Jews.”

None of these outrages – the very cause of chronic conflict and misery in the Middle East, along with the extremists' deliberate strategy of hiding and attacking from among their own surrounding civilian populations – have been addressed by the ICJ or key U.N. bodies.

Little pressure has been focused on Palestinian terrorists, and their enablers, to release well over 100 remaining Israeli and international hostages – including babies, children and the elderly – ten months after their barbarous abduction from inside Israel.

And now, as we write to you, millions of Israeli families prepare to take cover from a new Iranian onslaught – “punishment” for Israeli strikes on those dedicated to nothing else but murdering Jews.

Your Grace, does the omission of these facts not amount to “selective” treatment, and does the perennial assault on the humanity, equality and very lives of Jewish and other Israelis not qualify as discrimination and the withholding of dignity, freedom and hope?

Is combating this assault not also a “legal and moral necessity” worthy of emphasizing?

Maximal Palestinian political self-determination has been hindered only by the persistent, doctrinal and violent rejection of Jewish self-determination.

Respectfully,

Daniel S. Mariaschin, CEO

David J. Michaels, Director of U.N. and Intercommunal Affairs

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