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Written statement* submitted by United Nations Watch, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Islamic Republic of Iran's Aggression Against Israel is in Violation of UN Charter

When the Islamic Republic of Iran threatens to destroy Israel, it openly violates the United Nations Charter which requires members to settle their disputes peacefully, and prohibits members from “threat[ening] or us[ing] ... force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state...”¹

In breach of its own founding principles, the Human Rights Council applies a double standard by repeatedly condemning Israel for actions it takes in self-defense, while refusing to condemn Iran for inciting and supporting attacks on Israel, or the terrorist proxies Iran uses to implement such attacks. Thus, Resolution S-28/1, concerning Israel’s response to violence along the Gaza border, outrageously condemns only Israel, while ignoring Hamas and its patron Iran. The Council should condemn Iran for advocating the annihilation of a fellow UN member state, and for bankrolling Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

Below are examples of Iran’s support for attacks on Israel in 2018-19.

Iranian officials routinely malign Israel and call for its destruction:

- “We’re ready for the decisive war that will bring about Israel’s disappearance from the earth. Our young airmen are prepared for the day when Israel will be destroyed.”² (Iran’s air force chief, Brig. Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh, Jan. 29, 2019).
- “The Palestinian nation’s victory didn’t mean establishing a government in Tel Aviv—of course that will happen, too;”³ and “If you resist, you will gain victory. As long as resistance exists, the decline and perishing process of the Zionist regime will continue.”⁴ (Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, Dec. 31, 2018).
- “Israel must be destroyed and wiped out. There is no doubt that the Zionists must be annihilated and destroyed. This will definitely happen.”⁵ (IRGC Deputy Cultural Commander Brig. Gen. Mohammad Reza Naqdi, Dec. 28, 2018).
- “By God’s grace, the Palestinian nation will certainly gain victory over the enemies and will witness the day when the fabricated Zionist regime will be eradicated.”⁶ (Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, July 16, 2018).
- “#Israel is a malignant cancerous tumor in the West Asian region that has to be removed and eradicated: it is possible and it will happen.”⁷ (Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, June 3, 2018).

¹ Article 2, UN Charter.

² Judah Ari Gross, *Iranian air chief: ‘we’re ready for the decisive war that will destroy Israel*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (Jan. 21, 2019), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-air-chief-were-ready-for-war-that-will-destroy-israel/>.

³ @Khamenei_ir, TWITTER (Dec. 31, 2018 2:28 AM), https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir/status/1079685611508977664.

⁴ @Khamenei_ir, TWITTER (Dec. 31, 2018 2:07 AM), https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir/status/1079680475151650818.

⁵ *IRGC Deputy Commander Mohammed Reza Naqdi: Israel Must be Wiped Out, Zionists Annihilated*, MEMRI (Dec. 28, 2018), <https://www.memri.org/tv/irgc-deputy-commander-reza-naqdi-israel-must-annihilated-destroy-saudi-arabia-american-bases>.

⁶ @Khamenei_ir, TWITTER (July 16, 2018 3:26 AM), https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir/status/1018803983543078912.

⁷ @Khamenei_ir, TWITTER (June 3, 2018 10:49 AM), https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir/status/1003332853525110784?lang=en.

Iran sponsors Hezbollah, whose 1985 manifesto calls for the destruction of Israel: “our struggle will end only when this entity [Israel] is obliterated.”⁸

- Iran supports Hezbollah with annual funding of \$700-\$800 million per year.⁹
- Iran provides training and logistical support to Hezbollah, including approximately 130,000 rockets and missiles.¹⁰
- In his speech to the General Assembly on September 27, 2018, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu exposed three missile conversion sites located by Hezbollah in the heart of Beirut in or near civilian infrastructure. The purpose of the sites is to convert inaccurate projectiles into precision guided missiles.¹¹
- Between December 2018 and January 2019, Israel uncovered six Hezbollah attack tunnels from Lebanon into sovereign Israeli territory.¹² The sophisticated tunnels were built at a cost of millions, funded by Iran.¹³ Hezbollah located the tunnels in or near civilian structures, committing a double war crime—targeting Israeli civilians while hiding behind Lebanese civilians.¹⁴ The tunnels were built under the watch of The United Nations Interim Force on Lebanon (UNIFIL), which confirmed that the tunnels violated UN Security Council resolution 1701.¹⁵ Despite these blatant violations, at a December 19, 2018 meeting, the UN Security Council failed to condemn Hezbollah. In addition, UNIFIL has not been granted access to the tunnels.¹⁶

Iran Revolutionary Guard Forces have established bases in the Syrian Arab Republic from which to threaten Israel

- Iran has exploited the instability in the Syrian Arab Republic to establish a military presence there. Over time, Iran has deployed 2,000 to 5,000 IRGC soldiers in Syria. In addition, Iran has recruited 10,000 to 15,000 Shiite militia soldiers (not including Hezbollah operatives), many of whom serve close to the border with Israel.¹⁷ Many senior Iranian General have been killed in Syria, including at least one in the last year.¹⁸

⁸ Jonathan Masters and Zachary Laub, *Hezbollah Backgrounder*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS (Jan. 3, 2014), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hezbollah>.

⁹ David Adesnik, *Iran Spends \$16 Billion Annually to Support Terrorists and Rogue Regimes*, FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES (Jan. 10, 2018), <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2018/01/10/iran-spends-16-billion-annually-to-support-terrorists-and-rogue-regimes/>.

¹⁰ *Iran's Foreign and Defense Policies*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (Jan. 16, 2019), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44017.pdf>.

¹¹ *PM Netanyahu addresses UN General Assembly*, ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sep. 27, 2018), <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2018/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-UN-General-Assembly-27-September-2018.aspx>.

¹² Yoav Zitun, *IDF declares end of Operation Northern Shield with finding of 6th tunnel*, YNET NEWS (Jan. 13, 2019), <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5445732,00.html>.

¹³ @IDF, Twitter (Dec. 18, 2018 12:46 AM), <https://twitter.com/idf/status/1074949015840743424?lang=en>.

¹⁴ Anna Aronheim, *IDF Israel Tunnel-Destroying Material Discovered in Lebanon*, JERUSALEM POST (Dec. 27, 2018), <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Conquer-the-Galilee-IDF-reveals-Hezbollahs-tunnel-attack-strategy-575616>.

¹⁵ Isabel Kershner, *Israel Calls for International Action Against Hezbollah Tunnels*, NEW YORK TIMES (Dec. 19, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/19/world/middleeast/israel-calls-for-international-action-against-hezbollah-tunnels.html>.

¹⁶ *UNIFIL Not Given Access to Hezbollah Tunnels in Lebanon, Says UN Mideast Envoy*, HAARETZ (Jan. 23, 2019), <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/unifil-not-given-access-to-hezbollah-tunnels-in-lebanon-says-un-mideast-envoy-1.6868087>.

¹⁷ Orit Perlov and Udi Dekel, *The Model of Iranian Influence in Syria*, INSS (July 27, 2018),

- In an unprecedented direct attack on Israel, on February 10, 2018, Iran sent a weaponized attack drone into Israeli territory. Although the Israeli army shot down the drone before it caused any damage, the incident led Israel to conduct retaliatory strikes on Iranian targets in Syria.¹⁹ An Israeli F16 was shot down by Syrian anti-aircraft missiles during the strikes.²⁰
- On May 10, 2018, Iranian forces in Syria again attacked Israel, firing rockets on the Golan Heights, resulting in retaliatory strikes by Israel against Iran's military infrastructure in Syria.²¹
- In October 2018, Israel accused Iran of orchestrating a barrage of Gaza rocket fire from an Iranian base in Syria.²²
- On January 20, 2019, Iran launched a surface to surface missile from the outskirts of Damascus towards Israel's Mount Hermon ski resort in the middle of the day while civilians were skiing. Military spokesman Jonathan Conricus called the Iranian strike "premeditated," saying it had been planned months in advance.²³

Iran supports Palestinian terror organizations in the West Bank and Gaza

- Iran provides \$100 million annually to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the two main terror organizations in Gaza, the majority of which is used for military purposes (e.g., training, weapons, tunnel construction).²⁴
- In May 2018, the Israeli Security Agency reported that Iran is funding the violent return marches along the Gaza border.²⁵ In November 2018, Palestinian sources reported that Iran would "adopt the families of the martyrs and the wounded," during the Gaza marches, and would pay them a monthly stipend.²⁶

<https://www.inss.org.il/publication/model-iranian-influence-syria/>; *Hezbollah and Iran-handled Shiite militias are integrated into the Syrian army in its campaign to take control of south Syria*, THE MEIR AMIT INTELLIGENCE AND TERRORISM INFORMATION CENTER (July 11, 2018), <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/hezbollah-iran-handled-shiite-militias-integrated-syrian-army-campaign-take-control-south-syria/>.

¹⁸ *Iran's Revolutionary Guard says senior commander killed in Syria*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (June 23, 2018), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-revolutionary-guard-says-senior-commander-killed-in-syria/>; Robin Wright, *Iran's Generals are Dying in Syria*, NEW YORKER (Oct. 26, 2015), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/irans-generals-are-dying-in-syria>.

¹⁹ *Israel: Iranian drone shot down in February was weaponized*, CNN (April 13, 2018), <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/13/middleeast/israel-iran-drone/index.html>.

²⁰ Alexander Fulbright, *Iranian drone shot down in northern Israel in February was armed with explosives*, TIMES OF ISRAEL, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-drone-shot-down-in-northern-israel-in-february-was-armed-with-explosives/>.

²¹ Anna Aronheim, *IAF Commander: Israel Still Striking Targets in Syria*, JERUSALEM POST (May 22, 2018), <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/IAF-commander-Iran-launched-32-missiles-toward-Israel-in-early-May-558027>.

²² Fares Akram and Josef Federman, *After Gaza strikes, Israel threatens Iranian forces in Syria*, FOX NEWS (Oct. 27, 2018), <https://www.foxnews.com/world/after-gaza-strikes-israel-threatens-iranian-forces-in-syria>.

²³ Judah Ari Gross, *IDF: Iran troops fired missile at Israel as warning against future attacks*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (Jan. 21, 2019), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-iranian-troops-fired-missile-at-israel-as-a-warning-against-future-attacks/>.

²⁴ Elior Levy, *Iran's \$100 million aid to Hamas and Islamic Jihad*, YNET (March 8, 2018), <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5321985,00.html>.

²⁵ Judah Ari Gross, *Iran is funding Hamas's violent campaign at Gaza border, Shin Bet says*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (May 14, 2018), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-funding-hamas-efforts-to-foment-border-violence-shin-bet-says/>.

²⁶ *Iran sponsors families of Palestinians killed during Gaza protests*, MIDDLE EAST MONITOR (Sep. 28, 2018), <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181128-iran-sponsors-families-of-palestinians-killed-during-gaza-protests/>.

- In a November 23, 2018 TV interview, senior Hamas member Ali Baraka stated that Iran is the only country supporting the Palestinian “resistance” with money and weapons, and that its support enabled Hamas to rebuild its arsenal after the summer 2014 war. In December 2018, a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader traveled to Iran to meet with senior Iranian officials.²⁷
- According to Israel’s UN Ambassador, Danny Danon, Iran supports Middle East terrorism with \$7 billion annually, and is trying to “turn the West Bank into a fourth battle ground against Israel.”²⁸

In light of the above, we urge High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet to show moral leadership by calling on the Council to condemn Iran’s gross and systematic violations of the United Nations Charter and international human rights law.

²⁷ *Senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas figures praise Iran’s military support*, MEIR AMIT INTELLIGENCE AND TERRORISM INFORMATION CENTER (Jan. 6, 2019), <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/senior-palestinian-islamic-jihad-hamas-figures-praise-irans-military-support-threaten-next-war-rocket-fire-gaza-strip-will-reach-cities-israel-res/>.

²⁸ Tovah Lazaroff, *Danon: Iran spends 7B. A Year on Middle East Terror, Inc. in West Bank*, JERUSALEM POST (Jan. 22, 2019), <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Danon-Iran-spends-7-b-a-year-on-Middle-East-terror-incl-in-West-Bank-578285>.