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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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**Written statement* submitted by United Nations Watch (UN 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.

[4 July 2006]

* The present document contains the statement that was to have been delivered orally by the organization(s) concerned at the first special session. It is issued, unedited and in the original language(s), as received. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author(s).

Demonization is not Dialogue

This special session purports to be about recent Israeli actions in Gaza. It purports to be concerned about human rights. It purports to support dialogue and cooperation.

The truth is different. And we need to say the truth, because we shall never succeed in building a credible new Human Rights Council if it is founded on things that are untrue.

The truth is that this meeting is about something else, something much larger.

Today's gathering—as we sitting here know well—is merely a continuation of what transpired over the past few weeks at the Council's inaugural conference. The parties who demanded this special session are the same who succeeded in getting the Council to devote most of its substantive debate to denunciation of Israel. This, we note, was last Monday, after Palestinians had seized the Israeli hostage, but before Israel had ever responded.

These same parties also led the Council to grant the special rapporteur on Palestine the only expert mandate with no express year of expiry, thereby singling out Israel yet again.

Finally, last Friday, these same parties succeeded in getting the Council to censure one state alone, Israel, in a country-specific resolution. This special session was convened moments after that one-sided decision, when the regular session ended, and is linked together with each of those events.

The chain extends back further. Since the March creation of this Council, months of preparatory sessions in Geneva were dominated by repeated demands, by the same parties, for a special agenda item to condemn Israel. The Friday resolution, opposed by most democracies, has now accomplished that—permanently, for all future meetings.

The truth is that this special session, if we consider the larger picture, is actually not that special at all. It is merely the latest instance of something that for over three decades has pervaded the United Nations: the demonization of Israel.

Yes, the “Zionism is Racism” resolution of 1975 was eventually repealed. But its spirit lives on.

We see it in New York, where the General Assembly adopts 19 one-sided resolutions against Israel, while ignoring most of the world's abuses.

We see it in Geneva, where Israel is the only country excluded from any UN regional group, including at this Council. We see it in the ten life-sized panels hanging in the corridor downstairs, in the permanent exhibit designed to cast Israel as the world's greatest villain.

This demonization of one country and one people contravenes the principles of the UN Charter and of the resolution that created this Council, both of which guarantee equal rights to all. It undermines the integrity of the UN itself.

Demonization is not “dialogue”, and condemnation is not “cooperation.”

Defenders of human rights and of truth must now redouble their efforts to save the credibility of this Council.
