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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

### **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.

[30 May 2021]

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



## UN Must Take Action Against Systemic Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a form of systemic racism that endangers Jews worldwide and must be addressed by the UN and its Member States. Disturbingly, this ancient hatred has been on the rise for some time. In June 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres aptly described rising antisemitism as a “multi-headed monster” of intolerance which had created a visible and violent “tsunami of hatred” across the world.<sup>1</sup>

United Nations Watch is particularly concerned by increasing left-wing antisemitism from progressives who purport to care about racial justice. These activists are fueled by Palestinian antisemitic incitement which distorts history, denies the Holocaust and portrays Israel and all Jews as usurpers guilty of the worst evils of our time—genocide, ethnic cleansing and apartheid.<sup>2</sup>

Regrettably, the United Nations plays a significant role in legitimizing this type of antisemitism. The UN’s 2001 Durban Conference, which was supposed to be against racism, was hijacked by pro-Palestinian activists who turned the event into the worst international manifestation of antisemitism in the post-war period. It featured inflammatory speeches and declarations accusing Israel of racism, apartheid and genocide; a placard by pro-Palestinian activists reading “Hitler should have finished the job”; sales of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion; antisemitic caricatures of Jews with hooked noses, fangs dripping with blood, and clutching money; and intimidation and threats against Jewish activists.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, UN bodies obsessively and disproportionately focus on Israel, while ignoring egregious human rights violations by China, Cuba, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation, Pakistan, Turkey and others. Every year, the General Assembly adopts about 20 resolutions on Israel and only five on rest of the world combined. Similarly, 41% of all Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolutions since 2006 have targeted Israel.<sup>4</sup> Most of these are adopted under the discriminatory Agenda Item 7, which ensures that at every UNHRC session Israel is addressed in its own debate. Also, the UNHRC has had more special sessions and commissions of inquiry on Israel than on any other country.<sup>5</sup>

These inquiries, created by one-sided resolutions and given biased mandates that prejudge Israel’s guilt, have invariably given a free pass to Palestinian terrorism, denied Israel’s right to self-defense and accused Israel of multiple egregious war crimes, baseless charges that have fueled antisemitic attacks on Jews worldwide. The very fact that former South African Judge Richard Goldstone, author of the infamous 2009 Goldstone Report, later retracted the

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<sup>1</sup> Tackle ‘tsunami of hatred’ across the world urges Guterres, to counter anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance, UN NEWS (June 26, 2019), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1041361>.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., “We will continue the cycle of blood and killing,” threatens Fatah leader Rajoub, PMW (May 25, 2021), <https://palwatch.org/page/23833> (referring to Israel’s actions as “fascist and Nazi state terror”); AFP, At UN, Palestinian Envoy, Israel Accuse Each Other Of ‘Genocide,’ BARRONS (May 20, 2021), <https://www.barrons.com/news/palestinian-envoy-israel-accuse-other-of-genocide-at-un-01621532414> (Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Al-Malki accuses Israel of “genocide” against “whole Palestinian families.”); Donna Rachel Edmunds, Palestinian Authority regularly equates Israel and Israeli leaders to Nazism and Nazi leaders, PMW (April. 8, 2021), <https://palwatch.org/page/18689> (Official PA TV equates Israel with apartheid South Africa); PLO warns against Israeli policy of ‘ethnic cleansing,’ PMW (July 18, 2019), <https://palwatch.org/page/16018>.

<sup>3</sup> Durban IV: Key Facts, UN WATCH (May 24, 2021), <https://unwatch.org/countries-rejecting-durban-iv-updates-analysis-more/>.

<sup>4</sup> UN Watch Database (last visited May 27, 2021), [www.unwatch.or/database](http://www.unwatch.or/database).

<sup>5</sup> UN rights council calls 9th urgent session on Israel, UN WATCH (May 26, 2021), <https://unwatch.org/un-rights-council-calls-9th-urgent-session-on-israel/> (more than 35% of UNHRC special sessions have targeted Israel).

most serious accusations in that report, shows how distorted the UN's treatment of Israel has become.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the Palestinian leadership, aided by certain NGOs, continue to push these antisemitic lies about Israel, legitimizing Hamas terror attacks and violent antisemitic riots in Israel and around the world. Therefore, it should not be surprising that in wake of the recent Hamas-Israel conflict, numerous pro-Palestinian activists—a sector strongly supported by left-wing progressives—violently attacked Jews all over the world just because they were identifiably Jewish. Anti-Israel demonstrators worldwide engaged in Holocaust denial, conflated Zionism with racism, and rejected Israel's right to exist. They held up placards with antisemitic slogans like “Nazi Zionist Jews” and recited violent chants like “Zionists are terrorists,” creating a general atmosphere of fear.<sup>7</sup>

Violent threats and incitement included:

- In Brussels, hundreds chanted “Khaybar, Khaybar, O Jews, the army of Muhammad is returning,” referring to a battle in which Muslim troops massacred Jews.<sup>8</sup>
- In London, a convoy drove through a Jewish neighborhood with men hanging out of the windows inciting to kill and rape Jews.<sup>9</sup>
- In Chicago, a group of 20 pro-Palestinian demonstrators outside a local synagogue recited the genocidal chant “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and called for “Intifada.”<sup>10</sup>
- In Buenos Aires, the phrases “Los vamos a matar” (“We are going to kill them”) and “Ratas Judías” (“Jewish rats”) appeared at the entrance to the Israelite Association building.<sup>11</sup>

Worse, in numerous cities worldwide, members of a movement that self-defines as anti-racist physically assaulted Jews just for being Jewish:

- In Los Angeles, a caravan waving Palestinian flags and chanting “Death to Jews” assaulted Jewish diners at a restaurant.<sup>12</sup> The same day, two vehicles waving Palestinian flags chased down an Orthodox man, forcing him to run for his life.<sup>13</sup>
- In New York, Jews were attacked with fireworks in the heavily-Jewish Diamond District.<sup>14</sup> Also, five Palestinian protesters brutally beat up a Jewish man wearing a

<sup>6</sup> Richard Goldstone, Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and war crimes, WASHINGTON POST (April 1, 2011), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/reconsidering-the-goldstone-report-on-israel-and-war-crimes/2011/04/01/AFg111JC\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.9f74933d5001](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/reconsidering-the-goldstone-report-on-israel-and-war-crimes/2011/04/01/AFg111JC_story.html?utm_term=.9f74933d5001).

<sup>7</sup> Some at Anti-Israel Protests Express Antisemitism, Support for Terror, ADL (May 23, 2021), [https://www.adl.org/extremismblog?fbclid=IwAR3QE15EDkJz\\_IamaH6WOVLD6pGFBNIQHbCmQ83EL02V6HdMF7-XdXyqwqRY](https://www.adl.org/extremismblog?fbclid=IwAR3QE15EDkJz_IamaH6WOVLD6pGFBNIQHbCmQ83EL02V6HdMF7-XdXyqwqRY).

<sup>8</sup> Pro-Palestinian demonstration: Brussels police launch an investigation into possible anti-Semitic chants, NEWSIN24 (May 17, 2021), <https://news.in-24.com/news/23890.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Arrests in UK over claims antisemitic abuse hurled from cars, AP (May 16, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-europe-lifestyle-race-and-ethnicity-religion-b2f53585ed1a3eec4d7ba0d0cfc0fc47>.

<sup>10</sup> Ari Hart, FACEBOOK (May 16, 2021, 8:44 PM), <https://www.facebook.com/ari.hart/videos/10100247256802406>.

<sup>11</sup> In the midst of the war between Israel and Hamas, anti-Semitic expressions appeared in Argentina, CLARION (May 17, 2021), [https://www.clarin.com/politica/conflicto-belico-israel-hamas-aparecieron-expresiones-antisemitas-argentina\\_0\\_IXb43tL6u.html](https://www.clarin.com/politica/conflicto-belico-israel-hamas-aparecieron-expresiones-antisemitas-argentina_0_IXb43tL6u.html).

<sup>12</sup> Beverly Grove hate crime case: 2nd suspect arrested after attack on Jewish diners, LAPD chief says, ABC7 (May 25, 2021), <https://abc7.com/2nd-suspect-arrested-in-attack-on-jewish-diners-lapd-says/10693316/>.

<sup>13</sup> Orthodox Jewish man in Fairfax District chased by 2 vehicles as passengers wave Palestinian flags, ABC7 (May 20, 2021), <https://abc7.com/man-chased-down-fairfax-district-video-los-angeles-lapd/10665553/>.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Borgen, Brutally Beaten By Group Of Suspects in Manhattan's Diamond District, CBS NEW YORK (May 24, 2021), <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2021/05/24/jewish-man-brutally-beaten-in-manhattans-diamond-district>.

yarmulke in Times Square. The victim recalled having been violently kicked and punched all over his body.<sup>15</sup>

- In Montreal, protesters attacked participants at one pro-Israel solidarity rally with rocks and verbal assaults like “Dirty Jews” and “Death to Israel.”<sup>16</sup> At an earlier pro-Israel rally, a man holding an Israeli flag was hit in the back of the head with a rock, and a band of pro-Palestinian protesters hurled rocks, smoke bombs and pepper spray at participants.<sup>17</sup>

Jews who previously walked around freely displaying their religious symbols are now afraid to do so.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, across various social media platforms there has been a proliferation of anti-Jewish messages, including explicit praise for Hitler, conspiracies about Jewish control over the world, and demonizing Zionists. An analysis of Twitter in the days after the recent outbreak of violence showed that more than 17,000 tweets used variations of the phrase, “Hitler was right.”<sup>19</sup>

This global resurgence of antisemitism reinforces the importance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism,<sup>20</sup> now adopted by 30 countries, endorsed by various parliaments and public institutions, and accepted by human rights officials such as the UN expert on religious freedom.<sup>21</sup> Pro-Palestinian activists object to many of the examples in the IHRA definition of antisemitism, particularly those related to Israel, but recent racist violence against Jews from their movement underscores exactly why those examples are needed. Israel-criticism has become the new excuse to attack Jews. Unfortunately, critics of the IHRA definition are manipulating liberal and democratic values like free speech and anti-racism to mask antisemitism.<sup>22</sup>

Accordingly, United Nations Watch urges UN bodies, UN officials and Member States to endorse the IHRA definition of antisemitism and to strongly condemn all manifestations of antisemitism. Member States in particular should take action to protect their Jewish communities, including through hate crime legislation and criminal prosecutions under hate crime laws.

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- <sup>15</sup> Jewish man beaten by mob in NYC describes assault, FOX 5 NY (May 21, 2021), <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/we-all-want-peace-says-jewish-man-beaten-by-mob-during-clash-in-times-square>.
- <sup>16</sup> Threats to Montreal’s Jewish community being taken “extremely seriously,” MONTREAL GAZETTE (May 20, 2021), <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/threats-to-montreals-jewish-community-being-taken-extremely-seriously>.
- <sup>17</sup> Palestinian protestors violently attack Montreal’s Israel Solidary Rally, THE SUBURBAN (May 16, 2021), [https://www.thesuburban.com/news/city\\_news/palestinian-protestors-violently-attack-montreal-s-israel-solidarity-rally/article\\_ff96e59c-a7de-5d83-9c14-75bd9d37475e.html](https://www.thesuburban.com/news/city_news/palestinian-protestors-violently-attack-montreal-s-israel-solidarity-rally/article_ff96e59c-a7de-5d83-9c14-75bd9d37475e.html).
- <sup>18</sup> It’s a ‘scary time’ for L.A. Jews as attacks bring heightened security, anxiety, LA TIMES (May 23, 2021), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-30/reaction-to-anti-semitic-attacks-in-los-angeles>.
- <sup>19</sup> Preliminary ADL Data Reveals Uptick in Antisemitic Incidents Linked to Recent Mideast Violence, ADL (May 20, 2021), <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/preliminary-adl-data-reveals-uptick-in-antisemitic-incidents-linked-to-recent>.
- <sup>20</sup> Working Definition of Antisemitism, IHRA (Last visited May 27, 2021), <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>.
- <sup>21</sup> Report of the special rapporteur on freedom of religion, UN Doc. A/74/358 (Sep. 20, 2019), <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>.
- <sup>22</sup> Gerald Steinberg and Asaf Romirowsky, The Jerusalem Declaration’s Bogus Definition of Anti-Semitism, NATIONAL INTEREST (April 4, 2021), <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/jerusalem-declaration%E2%80%99s-bogus-definition-anti-semitism-181960>.