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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

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.

[18 August 2022]

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



Combating Antisemitism

We commend the United Nations and the international community for recently joining together to take an important stand in identifying and combating antisemitism.

In February 2020, the UN Secretary-General designated Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), as the UN Focal Point to monitor antisemitism and enhance a system-wide-response.

On August 1st, in reaction to the incident described below, Under-Secretary-General Moratinos stated: “I am determined to continue to work with all UN Member States, particularly the State of Israel, as well as all relevant non-state actors, UN entities and relevant bodies to combat and monitor antisemitism, as well as enhance a system-wide response. Words matter. Hate rhetoric is toxic. Therefore education about antisemitism is key to combating it in all its forms. It is also essential to agree on a definition on antisemitism. UNAOC remains committed to take a firm stance against antisemitism including any comments or actions seen as stigmatizing the Jewish people.”¹

We recall and commend the following statements by:

A. UN and International Organizations

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres: “The Secretary-General...has always been extremely clear in saying that there is no room for antisemitism in the work of the UN. Second, Israel is unquestionably a Member State of the United Nations, with the same rights and responsibilities as the other 192 countries that make up this organization.”²
- UNHRC President Federico Villegas: Commissioner Miloon Kothari’s remarks “could reasonably be interpreted as stigmatization of the Jewish people. . . which is at the heart of any expression of antisemitism.”³
- UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion Ahmed Shaheed: “Last year in May, a foreign minister claimed that Israel controls the global media. Now this trope has come to the UN! The UN must take up my call to use the IHRA Working Definition for awareness-raising across the UN system, in line with international human rights standards.”⁴
- European Commission, Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi: “Outraged by the antisemitic and hateful statement of member of COI, questioning also Israel’s UN membership. Antisemitism has no place in our society. These remarks cannot go unaddressed.”⁵

B. UN Member States

- U.S. Ambassador to the UNHRC Michele Taylor and Special Envoy on Antisemitism Deborah Lipstadt: “Recently, Miloon Kothari, an appointed Commissioner of the UNHRC’s COI related to Israel made comments in a media interview referring disparagingly to the ‘Jewish lobby,’ echoing age-old antisemitic tropes, and questioning the right of the state of Israel to be a member of the United Nations. The United States is in solidarity with the Government of Israel and the Israeli people. We categorically reject antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, including the comments by Mr. Kothari, which are outrageous, inappropriate, and corrosive.”⁶
- U.S. Ambassador to UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield: “There should be no place for such antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment at the UN. These remarks by a COI Commissioner at the UNHRC cannot go unaddressed.”⁷
- U.S. Congress, Bipartisan Letter of 23 Representatives: “Mr. Kothari’s comments indicate an inherent bias against Israel and the Jewish people with a mindset fundamentally incapable of adjudicating questions about Israel in an objective manner. Furthermore, his comments demonstrate that the very worst of our suspicions regarding the prejudicial nature of the COI have been fully justified.”⁸

- Canadian Ambassador Bob Rae: “A COI is different from a never-ending Inquisition. Blatantly biased, anti-semitic comments are completely unworthy of the UN, the UNHRC, and are a disgrace to institutions supposedly dedicated to the rule of law.”⁹
- UK Ambassador Simon Manley: “Recent comments by Miloon Kothari, a member of the UNHRC Israel COI, questioning Israel’s UN membership and speaking of “the Jewish lobby” controlling social media are unacceptable and offensive. Antisemitism has absolutely no place in the UN.”¹⁰
- Australian Ambassador Amanda Gorely: “Deeply concerned by recent comments made by UNHRC Israel COI Commissioner Miloon Kothari. Antisemitism is unacceptable and we condemn it wherever it appears.”¹¹
- Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky: “I note with regret that the recent comments by Mr. Miloon Kothari, a member of the UNHRC Israel COI, undermine the impartiality of UN Special Procedures, which is a cornerstone of the UN human rights system.”¹²
- Germany: “Germany firmly stands against any form of antisemitism. We therefore deeply deplore recent statements by Miloon Kothari, member of the COI on Israel/OPT @UN_HRC.”¹³
- Netherlands: “The Netherlands is shocked by a recent interview with a member of the UNHRC COI on Israel/OPT in which he refers to the “Jewish Lobby” and questions Israel’s UN membership. We strongly condemn antisemitism – these COI member remarks are unacceptable.”¹⁴
- France: “Strong disapproval of the remarks of Miloon Kothari, a member of the COI on OPT and Israel. We must be ‘uncompromising in the contemporary fight against antisemitism’ as President Macron has said.”¹⁵
- Italy: “Italy firmly stands against any form of antisemitism and deplores recent statements by Miloon Kothari, member of the COI on Israel/OPT @UN_HRC.”¹⁶
- Austria: “We are concerned about recent comments by CoI on OPT/Israel member Miloon Kothari. Austria continues to strongly stand against any form of antisemitism.”¹⁷
- Belgium: “[Belgium] is firmly engaged in the fight against antisemitism. We deplore recent statements by Mr. Miloon Kothari, member of the CoI on OPT and Israel.”¹⁸
- Switzerland: “Switzerland is troubled by recent comments by a member of the UNHRC COI on OPT and Israel. We stand firmly against antisemitism in any form.”¹⁹
- Sweden: “Sweden strongly believes in zero-tolerance against antisemitism and deplores recent statements by Mr. Miloon Kothari, Member of the CoI on OPT and Israel.”²⁰
- Norway: “Norway is deeply troubled by recent comments made by Miloon Kothari, member of the UNHRC CoI on OPT and Israel. We stand firmly against antisemitism in any form.”²¹
- Denmark: “Denmark deplores recent comments made by Miloon Kothari, member of the UNHRC CoI on OPT and Israel. We stand firmly against antisemitism.”²²
- Brazil: “The Mission of Brazil in Geneva took note with deep concern of the recent comments made by Mr. Miloon Kothari, a member of the UN CoI on the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel. As member of International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Brazil considers that the antisemitic references made by Mr. Kothari...are unacceptable and should be immediately retracted. Brazil reaffirms that mandate holders of international human rights mechanisms should at all times act with impartiality, objectivity and equanimity. Under no circumstances should they express political views or opinions, especially on issues within the purview of their mandate. Brazil calls on the CoI to strictly respect the rules of procedures and the code of conduct of special procedures of the HRC.”²³

- Hungary: “The government of Hungary has declared zero-tolerance against anti-Semitism and strongly condemns all its forms and considers the statement of the member of the investigation committee unacceptable. The Hungarian Government will continue to act against expressions against Israel and the Jewish people and other discriminatory, politically biased behavior.”²⁴

C. Institutions

We also commend the following for speaking out against this antisemitic incident: ADL, Bnai Brith, American Jewish Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, AIPAC, Hadassah Women, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Jewish Federations of North America, CAMERA, British Board of Deputies, FDD, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Beverly Hills City Council, World Jewish Congress, Zionist Federation of Australia, StandWithUs, and Prof. Rosa Freedman in the European Journal of International Law.²⁵

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- 1 @MiguelMoratinos, Twitter (August 1, 2022, 6:41 PM), <https://twitter.com/MiguelMoratinos/status/1554130278007947265>.
- 2 Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, UN (August 1, 2022), <https://press.un.org/en/2022/db220801.doc.htm>.
- 3 @HillelNeuer, Twitter (July 30, 2022, 10:25 PM), https://twitter.com/HillelNeuer/status/1553461867464609793?s=20&t=8RyQ_xQ6pnkrQlq5EaOa8Q.
- 4 @ahmedshaheed, Twitter (July 31, 2022, 2:34 AM), <https://twitter.com/ahmedshaheed/status/1553524346961928192>.
- 5 @OliverVarhelyi, Twitter (July 28, 2022, 9:51 PM), <https://twitter.com/OliverVarhelyi/status/1552728345334501377>.
- 6 Statement on Antisemitic Remarks by a Commissioner of the Israeli COI, U.S. Mission in Geneva (July 28, 2022), <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2022/07/28/statement-on-antisemitic-remarks-by-a-commissioner-of-the-israel-coi/>. See also @USAmbHRC, Twitter (July 28, 2022, 8:32 PM), <https://twitter.com/USAmbHRC/status/1552708557950390278>.
- 7 @USAmbUN, Twitter (July 28, 2022, 5:31 PM), <https://twitter.com/USAmbUN/status/1552663142815121410>.
- 8 Letter by 23 Congressional Representatives to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, U.S. Congress (July 29, 2022), https://lamborn.house.gov/sites/lamborn.house.gov/files/wysiwyg_uploaded/Final%20Letter%20to%20SecState%20on%20Israel%20COI.pdf.
- 9 @BobRae48, Twitter (July 28, 2022, 3:42 PM), <https://twitter.com/BobRae48/status/1552635724754812928>. See also @CanadaGeneva, Twitter (July 29, 2022, 1:14 PM), <https://twitter.com/CanadaGeneva/status/1552960805800476673>.
- 10 @SimonManleyFCDO, Twitter (July 28, 2022, 2:48 PM), <https://twitter.com/SimonManleyFCDO/status/1552622107577679873>.
- 11 @AustraliaUN_GVA, Twitter (August 1, 2022, 12:07 PM), https://twitter.com/AustraliaUN_GVA/status/1554031032428544001.
- 12 @JanLipavsky, Twitter (July 29, 2022, 7:30 PM), <https://twitter.com/JanLipavsky/status/1553055367600406529>.
- 13 @GermanyUNGeneva, Twitter (July 30, 2022, 2:37 PM), <https://twitter.com/GermanyUNGeneva/status/1553343981341347841>.
- 14 @NLinGeneva, Twitter (July 29, 2022), <https://twitter.com/NLinGeneva/status/1553089241802055680>.
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- 16 @ItalyUN_Geneva, Twitter (August 1, 2022, 11:55 AM), https://twitter.com/ItalyUN_Geneva/status/1554027974923616257.
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- 19 @swiss_un, Twitter (August 3, 2022, 6:42 PM),
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- 20 @SwedenGeneva, Twitter (August 3, 2022),
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- 22 @DKUNmisgva, Twitter (August 5, 2022, 10:56 AM),
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- 23 @govitamaraty, Twitter (August 4, 2022, 3:42 AM),
<https://twitter.com/govitamaraty/status/1554991158593572866>.
- 24 The Government of Hungary Announced Zero Tolerance Against Anti-Semitism (July 29, 2022),
<https://kormany.hu/hirek/magyarorszag-kormanya-zero-toleranciat-hirdetett-az-antiszemizmus-ellen>.
- 25 Full compendium of statements: <https://unwatch.org/the-compendium-of-world-condemnations-of-antisemitic-un-investigator-miloon-kothari>.