

United Nations' Bigotry Towards Israel: UNRWA Antisemitism Poisons Palestinian Youth

Hearing Opening Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ) November 8, 2023

This hearing: **United Nations' Bigotry Towards Israel: UNRWA Antisemitism Poisons Palestinian Youth** will come to order.

Make no mistake, *antisemitic bigotry* is at the root of the UN's hostility to Israel, which is ugly, evil, and manifests in almost every UN entity.

The United Nations is unquestionably the world's foremost legitimizer of antisemitism, including in its most virulent and violent forms. The monstrous and genocidal atrocities we have seen pouring out of Gaza since October 7 are antisemitic hate crimes, the logical consequence of the unbridled antisemitism fomented and enabled by the United Nations.

Today, Israel is defending itself from the cowardly invasion and massacre by Hamas. It has an absolute right to defend itself. We have all seen the evidence of the ugly images of Hamas's crimes—of psychotic terrorists butchering innocent civilians, rape, hostage taking, the beheading of babies and daily indiscriminate missile attacks reminiscent of Nazi buzz bombs and V-2 rockets.

Yet yesterday, Charles Hilu of the Washington Free Beacon reported that Francesca Albanese, who serves as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights special rapporteur for Palestinian territories employs tortured illogic to say that that Israel has no right to self-defense against Hamas under international law.

We are here to talk about another set of images we have seen on the news—United Nations diplomats, and meetings of UN agencies engaged in the work of licensing, encouraging, legitimizing this demented hatred of Israel. What is going on at the UN may look civilized—but in fact what is going on is morally very ugly. The activities of many UN entities are a **cause** — the genocidal attacks of the past month an **effect** of that cause.

I have been in the fight against antisemitism for all of my 43 years in Congress—including an early trip in 1982 to Moscow and Leningrad on behalf of Soviet Jews. I've have chaired [14 congressional hearings](#) focused on antisemitism—and wrote the [law](#) that created the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism at the US State Department. Later I wrote another [law](#) that upgraded and strengthened the Special Envoy to the rank of Ambassador, reporting directly to the Secretary of State.

Kathy Manning and six other members and I co-chair the Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism. And what we see at the UN is antisemitism in its most dangerous form, a genocidal, eliminationist ideology.

At a [hearing that I chaired in June of 2004](#) and at the OSCE Berlin Conference, Natan Sharansky powerfully articulated his incisive "3-D" test for identifying antisemitism and said it often tries to 'hide behind the veneer of legitimate criticism of Israel.'

He said: "Of course, if you want to be successful in the struggle against anti-Semitism, as against any other evil, there must be moral clarity of the issue: what we are talking about. It is important to define the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. Israel is a strong democracy, and the only democracy in the Middle East, and it is built on the criticism from within and without. Of course, we support all forms of legitimate criticism, but it is very important to see the difference, draw the line between this legitimate criticism and anti-Semitism."

According to his "3-D" test, criticism of Israel is nothing less than antisemitic when it passes over into a [demonization](#) of Jews and Israel,

delegitimizes the Jewish state, or applies double standards—that is one standard for Israel, another for every other country.

A few words about the UN entities most involved in promoting antisemitism.

UNRWA, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, was set up in 1949 to provide aid to refugees—74 years later it is still going, which is absurd in itself, since nearby Arab nations will not permit the former to integrate into their societies.

UNRWA provides education in hatred of Jews for the vastly expanded number of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of the original refugees. UNRWA's textbooks, curricula, summer camps, official media are all infamous incubators of hatred. Aspects of its propaganda are so twisted I won't describe them here—but its publicly available materials encourage children to "martyrdom" as suicide-bombers—the worst form of child abuse.

A joint report of UN Watch and IMPACT-SE from March of this year carefully documents that "UNRWA deliberately and systematically hires teachers who publicly praise Hitler, glorify terrorist attacks against Israeli children, and spread Goebbels-like conspiracy theories against Jews."

A new IMPACT-SE report just released exposes an absolutely deplorable fact: "UNRWA Staff Celebrate Hamas Massacre."

Similarly, IMPACT-SE has published three reports analyzing "hundreds of pages of teaching materials revealing that content glorifying terrorism, inciting violence and promoting antisemitism... is actually included in UNRWA's own materials—created by UNRWA staff, for UNRWA students."

UN Watch has published many pages of documentation on over 100 UNRWA teachers and their Facebook pages inciting to antisemitism and praise of jihadi terrorism makes grim reading.

UN Watch has released a new report on November 6th, documenting how "as soon as news of the horrific slaughter broke, which was livestreamed on social

media by some of the terrorists, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) staff immediately celebrated and justified it on Facebook".

As the report states, this is "a symptom of a much larger, systemic problem—the fact that UNRWA hires antisemitic and terrorist supporting staff in the first place..."

UNRWA bears a heavy moral responsibility for the perversity we saw performed by Hamas in its October 7 invasion of Israel.

In 2018 President Trump ceased all US funding to UNRWA. Regrettably, President Biden reversed that policy and has given UNRWA a billion dollars.

The UN Human Rights Council is a hypocritical institution—a place where some of the world's worst human rights abusers have made Israel a “permanent agenda item” so as to be able to demonize it at every meeting. Its “commission of inquiry” on Israel and reports are beyond biased—based on unsubstantiated reports and strained logic, their only purpose is to put a mantle of apparent authority on wild accusations of Israel's worst enemies.

We're fortunate to have here today Hillel Neuer of UN Watch—the world's leading authority on the Human Rights Council who will testify today that "since its creation in June 2006 to June 2023, the Council has adopted zero resolutions on serial human rights abusers such as China, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Zimbabwe, and Cuba. It adopted 2 condemnatory resolutions on Sudan, 3 on Venezuela, 12 on Eritrea, 14 on Iran, 16 on North Korea, 42 on Syria—and 103 on Israel."

Shockingly, [Iran chaired the UN Human Rights Council Social Forum](#) on November 2nd and 3rd.

The UN General Assembly is infamous for annually adopting between 16 to 20 resolutions condemning Israel, but an average of 12 country-specific resolutions on the rest of the world combined. One of the worst was in 1975, *UNGA Resolution 3246 (1975)* addressed the Palestinians and "reaffirms the

legitimacy of the peoples' struggle for liberation from ... alien subjugation by all available means, *including armed struggle*."

This was written to legitimize Palestinian terrorism—and Hamas and other terrorist organizations cite it regularly. It must be repealed, just as the "Zionism is racism" resolution was repealed.

The UN Security Council has been, since October 7, unwilling to specifically condemn Hamas or to acknowledge Israel's right to self-defense.

The UN Secretary General has done even worse, saying Hamas's atrocities "did not happen in a vacuum", and then pointing to "56 years of suffocating occupation". Secretary-General Antonio Guterres claimed he was not "justifying" Hamas, but in fact he is relativizing and excusing them. Thankfully, Israel has an ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan, who had the strength of character to call out the Secretary-General.

The relevant context for understanding Hamas's genocidal atrocities is provided by the UN itself, and its persistent morally bankrupt policy of promoting antisemitic grievances and justifying antisemitic violence.

Finally, there is a **web of bodies dedicated solely to harming Israel**, for example the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Palestinian People, and the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. These are funded by General Assembly, and function solely as propaganda channels for antisemitism, grievances, and maligning Israel. There are no similar committees on any other country in the world.