

The UN's Anti-Racism Mission Excludes Jews

By Hilary Miller

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António Guterres, the UN's secretary-general, has described rising anti-Semitism as a 'multi-headed monster' of intolerance that's creating a 'tsunami of hatred' across the world, and the UN proclaims 'anti-racism' as its defining ideology. But the UN is failing to confront discrimination and violence against Jews - and at times even nurturing it.

The UN special rapporteur on racism, E. Tendayi Achiume, ought to be among the leading global voices speaking out against Jew hate. Last year, she called on Bulgaria to stop hate speech and discrimination against the Roma, she urged the Human Rights Council to address abuses against people of African descent and she appealed to world leaders to confront 'structural forms of racial and ethnic injustice'.

Yet Achiume has a blind spot about one kind of racial and ethnic injustice. When 'anti-Zionist' activists descend on Jewish neighborhoods with calls to 'kill and rape' Jewish women, and when Jews were targeted by protesters chanting 'Zionists are terrorists' at rallies around the world, Achiume says nothing.

She did, though, produce a report on anti-Semitism in 2019. But that only addressed the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the context of 'neo-Nazi and related intolerance'. This exposes a fundamental flaw in the UN system, one amplified and promoted by influencers, thought leaders, academics and journalists: Jew-hatred can only be acknowledged when it carries a tiki torch. When it comes cloaked in the language of 'racial justice', it's excused or ignored.

The UN human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, has also been silent about race-based violence against Jews. Not only that, she's lined up with the inciters. She recently marked the 20th anniversary of 2001 World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, by endorsing its racist final declaration. Instead of combating racism as it claimed to, the Durban conference became one of the worst international manifestations of anti-Semitism in the postwar period.

The Durban conference featured ugly displays of intolerance, anti-Semitism and baseless claims against the Jewish state. Anti-Israel activists gathered from all over the world to accuse the Jewish state of



United Nations general assembly hall in New York City.

Photo: UN.

crimes against humanity. They equated Zionism with racism, threatened Jewish activists, and brandished anti-Semitic caricatures of money-clutching Jews with hooked noses and fangs dripping with blood. Two decades later, these memes recur in the anti-Jewish invective spouted by left-wing activists in the name of 'racial justice'.

Like his human rights chief, Secretary-General António Guterres has also said nothing about the rise in attacks against Jews, much of it incited by anti-Zionists on the left. Last year, however, Guterres tapped the Spanish diplomat Miguel Moratinos to enhance the UN's 'system-wide response' against anti-Semitism. In March, Moratinos noted that mounting anti-Semitism on social media is of 'unanimous concern'. Now would be an appropriate time for him to address the online proliferation of anti-Jewish propaganda like 'Hitler was Right', which was tweeted more than 17,000 times after the recent outbreak of violence between Israel and Hamas. Curiously, however, Moratinos has been silent.

The silence of UN officials on anti-Semitism comes as major UN bodies continue to legitimize anti-Zionists' form of anti-Semitism by obsessively and disproportionately focusing on Israel, while giving a pass to serial and more serious abusers of human rights like China,

Iran and Russia. In 2020, the General Assembly adopted 17 resolutions against Israel, and only six on the rest of the world combined.

Similarly, since its creation in 2006 the UN Human Rights Council has passed more resolutions on Israel - 95 - than it has on Iran, Syria and North Korea put together. Most of these are adopted under Agenda Item 7, which ensures that at every council session Israel alone is addressed in its own debate. Just last week, the UNHCR held its ninth special session targeting Israel, compared to only one each on Sudan, Libya and Burundi, and zero on Iran, China and Russia. The Council's resolution completely ignores Hamas's double war crimes of launching 4,000 rockets aimed at Israeli civilians, while using its own civilians as human shields. The resolution also omits to mention the drastic surge in discrimination and violence against Jews, instead accusing the Jewish state of 'systematic discrimination'.

There are notable exceptions to the UN's systematic discrimination against and denigration of the world's only Jewish state. One heartening exception is Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion. On numerous occasions last month Dr. Shaheed used his Twitter account to call attention to the spate of anti-Jewish violence, and to debunk diversionary claims about the semantics of anti-Semitism.

This was not new for Shaheed, a former foreign minister of the Maldives. In September 2019, he published an important report on anti-Semitism from the right and left, as well as from radical Islamism. He also joined the State Department and many western governments in endorsing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism, which includes the conflation of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. But Dr. Shaheed is an anomaly compared to his fellow UN experts who see anti-racism everywhere and anti-Semitism nowhere.

Jews should not be selectively excluded from the United Nations' anti-racism mission. It's time for top UN officials, especially those in the human rights machinery, to acknowledge anti-Semitism as a form of systemic racism - and to take concrete action to confront bigotry, hatred and violence targeting Jews worldwide.

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