

‘Enough With the Bias’: 22 Countries Sign Declaration Against UN Probe into Israel

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A group of 22 countries, led by the US, have signed a declaration criticizing an open-ended probe established by the UN Human Rights Council into alleged human rights abuses committed by Israel.

“We believe the nature of the COI [Commission of Inquiry] established last May is further demonstration of long-standing, disproportionate attention given to Israel in the Council and must stop,” US Ambassador Michèle Taylor stated at the 50th session of the HRC in Geneva, where the first report of the commission was presented on Monday. “We continue to believe that this long-standing disproportionate scrutiny should end, and that the Council should address all human rights concerns, regardless of country, in an even-handed manner.”

“Regrettably, we are concerned that the Commission of Inquiry will further contribute to the polarization of a situation about which so many of us are concerned,” Taylor cautioned.

Among the countries signing the statement are Austria, Bulgaria, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Eswatini, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, North Macedonia, Holland, Palau, Togo, and the United Kingdom.

Israel dismissed the findings of the first report released last week by the COI which



The Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room of the Palace of Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland. The room is the meeting place of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Photo: Ludovic Courtès via Wikimedia Commons.

blamed the country’s “perpetual occupation” of Palestinian territory as the “key root” of recurring tensions and cycles of violence in the more than a century long Middle East conflict. The COI was created

last year by the UN Human Rights Council following the 11-day war in May between Israel and the Hamas terror group in the Gaza Strip.

The resolution calling for its creation was

introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Conference, and passed with a vote of 24 in favor, nine against, and 14 abstentions.

COI’s mandate as a permanent and open-ended entity dedicated solely to investigate alleged Israeli abuse of Palestinians has in the past been attacked for being unusually broad. Meanwhile, the UNHRC has been criticized for approving more condemnatory resolutions on Israel than on Iran, Syria, and North Korea combined.

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid thanked the US and Secretary of State Antony Blinken for leading the signatories of the declaration.

“Today is a day of change at the Human Rights Council. A day on which morality is overcoming hypocrisy,” Lapid said. “Enough with the bias. Enough with the obsession with Israel.”

“I hope the Human Rights Council will understand the clear message delivered by this statement and cancel the COI which was born in sin, and will start dealing with human rights as it was supposed to from the day of its establishment,” he added.

In the past, some UNHRC investigations against Israel have been partially discredited by their own authors. Justice Richard Goldstone, who chaired the UNHRC’s fact-finding-mission into Israel’s military operations during the 2008 Gaza war, ultimately distanced himself from some of its conclusions.