The Gang-Assault on Israel at the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly

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When it comes to the annual sessions of the UN General Assembly, one can easily bet on the fact that of all the General Assembly committees, the Fourth Committee, with the curious title of “Special Political and Decolonization Committee,” will blindly and inanely adopt the same resolutions, year after year. As the runner-up, the Assembly’s Third Committee entitled “Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues” earns a place on the podium.

### UN General Assembly Main Committees

Sadly, both the 3rd and 4th General Assembly committees would not have “fulfilled their international task” without duly adopting their regular, annual Israel-bashing resolutions.

Perusing the new spate of resolutions adopted by these committees during the current 75th session of the General Assembly during October and November 2020, and pending automatic confirmation by the General Assembly Plenary in the coming days, the General Assembly will not disappoint. It is a safe bet. There is nothing new!

The same Israel-bashing resolutions, repeatedly rehashed every year, are re-adopted by virtually the same automatic majorities of around 150 states (including the EU states and other countries ostensibly friendly to Israel), with virtually the same states (usually only Israel and the United States, but occasionally together with Canada and Australia) voting against, and a few states abstaining (Pacific Island states and occasionally Hungary and the Czech Republic).

A regular “squad” of some of the world’s most non-democratic, repressive, and ardently hypocritical states – genuine “paragons of humanitarian virtue” – such as Cuba, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Nicaragua, Qatar, with occasional assistance from other enlightened democracies like South Africa, Egypt, and Jordan, support proposals sponsored by the Palestinian UN observer delegation that the UN has, for almost a decade, denominated as the “State of Palestine.”

These resolutions emanate from and revolve around two agenda items:

* “United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East” (item 52) which has been on the UN agenda since the UNRWA agency was created in 1948,[2](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn2) and the
* “Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories” (item 53), which has been on the agenda since the establishment of the special committee in 1968.[3](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn3)

These agenda items generate a spate of annual, self-repeating, political resolutions that revolve around the one single theme of singling out Israel.

While each resolution adopted under these agenda items addresses the specific subject matter of its respective title, when seen together, they are, by their very nature, overly repetitive and in many respects, duplicate each other, all having one central aim – to criticize, single-out and to delegitimize Israel.

Specifically, they cover the following spheres:

* Assistance to Palestine refugees;
* [Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East;](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.10)
* [Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.11);
* [Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.12);
* [Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan;](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.13)
* [Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.14), and
* [The occupied Syrian Golan.](http://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/75/L.15)[4](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn4)

Since the resolutions, their proponents, and the voting patterns of those states that support them, are identical to those adopted in the previous years, one may wonder why responsible states, as well as the UN itself that purports to be the only international body engaged in international peace and wellbeing, bother to re-propose, re-sponsor and re-adopt the same resolutions year after year after year?

Why do they waste the valuable time and resources of the United Nations and the states that send their representatives to sit on this curious committee?

More serious questions abound, such as the substantive contribution that such resolutions make to peace generally and in the Middle East in particular. Similarly, why would any self-respecting, democratic countries – even those that perhaps unwittingly continue to support such inane resolutions because they did so in past years – want to be a party to this gross abuse of the aims and purposes of the United Nations as well as the terms and spirit of the UN Charter?

### Acknowledging the Middle East Peace Process

Even more curious is the fact that some of the resolutions acknowledge and welcome the efforts over the years to achieve Middle East peace:

Welcoming the convening at Madrid of the Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967)…and 338 (1973) aimed at the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace…[5](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn5)

Recalling the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of September 13, 1993 and the subsequent implementation agreements between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.[6](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn6)

Recalling further the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[7](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn7)

Stressing the need for full compliance with the Israeli-Palestinian agreements reached in the context of the Middle East peace process, including the Sharm el-Shiekh understandings, and the implementation of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[8](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn8)

However, while acknowledging and welcoming those very international instruments that call for and set up mechanisms for negotiation between the parties of the permanent status of the territories, the same resolutions go on to undermine and prejudge the outcome of any negotiating process. The resolutions determine in advance that the territories are Palestinian and demand and impose upon Israel a one-sided resolution, totally incompatible with any bona fide and genuine negotiating process.

### Deliberate Falsification of History

Another sad example of the absurdity of these resolutions is the curious preambular provision in the resolution on “Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”[9](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn9) that refers to “tensions and violence with regard to the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif.”

The use of this solely Muslim denomination for Jerusalem’s Temple Mount is tantamount to a crass denial of the historical and religious heritage of the Jewish and Christian religions in the holy sites of Jerusalem. It also ignores the fact that Jerusalem, in and of itself, including the status of the holy sites, is an agreed-upon negotiating issue between Israel and the Palestinians, pursuant to the Oslo Accords.

This reference directly negates the following preambular paragraph of the same resolution that “reaffirms the obligation to respect the historic status quo, the special significance of the holy sites, and the importance of the City of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions.”

An apt critique of these resolutions was voiced on the day on which the resolutions were adopted in the UN General Assembly’s 4th committee, November 5, 2020, by Hillel Neuer, Director of UN Watch:

One of today’s resolutions—drafted and co-sponsored by Syria—falsely condemns Israel for ‘repressive measures’ against Syrian citizens in the Golan Heights,” said Neuer. “This is but the latest act in the UN’s theater of the absurd.

The resolution condemns Israel for holding on to the Golan Heights and demands Israel hand the land and its people to Syria. “It is astonishing,” said Neuer. “After the Syrian regime has killed half a million of its own people, how can the UN call for more people to be handed over to Assad’s rule? The text is morally galling and logically absurd.”

Today’s resolutions claim to care about Palestinians, yet the UN is oblivious to more than 3,000 Palestinians who have been slaughtered, maimed and expelled by Assad’s forces.

Today’s farce at the General Assembly underscores a simple fact: the UN’s automatic majority has no interest in truly helping Palestinians, nor in protecting anyone’s human rights; the goal of these ritual, one-sided condemnations is to scapegoat Israel

The UN’s disproportionate assault against the Jewish state undermines the institutional credibility of what is supposed to be an impartial international body. Politicization and selectivity harm its founding mission, eroding the UN Charter’s promise of equal treatment to all nations large and small,[10](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn10)

### The General Assembly 3rd Committee

While the brunt of the Israel-bashing is reserved for the 4th Special Political and Colonialization Committee, the 3rd Committee dealing with Human Rights, Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues, claims its own annual resolution condemning Israel, under the agenda item entitled “Right of Peoples to Self Determination” (agenda item 71).

This resolution, sponsored by the usual “squad” of repressive regimes – Angola, Peoples Republic of Korea, Egypt, Syria, Venezuela, and Vietnam, but also by some “normal” states such as China, Chile, France, and the Netherlands, and supported by virtually all the EU and other western countries – “reaffirms the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine.”[11](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn11)

At the same time, in its 8th preambular paragraph, the resolution stresses the urgency of achieving without delay “a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

Logically, since, in the words of this resolution, achieving an “independent state of Palestine” is part and parcel of the same “just, lasting, and comprehensive peace settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides,” the resolution is self-contradictory and illogical inasmuch as it attempts to influence and pre-determine the outcome of the very peace-negotiation process that it advocates as the means of settling the dispute.

How do those states and organs that are signatory to the 1991-3 Oslo Peace Process Accords (including the Russian Federation, the EU, Egypt, Norway, and Jordan, as well as the UN itself, which has repeatedly endorsed the Oso Accords), align themselves with such inverted logic?

### UN Specialized Agencies

While the UN, the central organ of the international community, indeed sets the tone in the annual festival of Israel-bashing, the UN’s own specialized agencies and related organs, mostly based in Geneva, are not far behind.

It might be assumed that a specialized UN agency, as the name implies, would prefer to reserve its professional expertise, credibility, and dignity to the professional sphere which it purports to regulate.

Thus, the same “squad” of irresponsible states and quasi-states inevitably presents itself before the delegates attending the general assemblies of these specialized organizations to abuse the professional nature, aims, and functions of the specialized agency and manipulate the member states to inject politicization into these bodies. All this with the aim of condemning Israel for whatever issue might have even the most minimal relation to the subject matter of the organization.

All of these specialized topics and UN organizations are infected with this anti-Israel political virus:  labor (ILO), health (WHO), education, science and culture (UNESCO), industrial development (UNIDO), international civil aviation (ICAO), maritime affairs (IMO), food and agriculture (FAO), trade and development (UNCTAD), development (UNDP), the monetary fund (IMF), telecommunications (ITU), tourism (WTO), postal issues (UPU), intellectual property (WIPO), meteorology (WMO), police (INTERPOL), and atomic energy (IAEA).

### World Health Organization

The most recent example of such abuse and manipulation is the World Health Assembly’s recent decision on November 11, 2020, entitled “Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan,”[12](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn12) which is an exact carbon-copy of the resolution adopted at the 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019.[13](https://jcpa.org/the-gang-assault-on-israel-at-the-75th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/" \l "_edn13)

This resolution was adopted by 78 states, with 14 opposing (United States, UK, Australia, Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Slovenia, Cameroon, Swaziland, and Micronesia), with 32 abstentions and 56 countries absent.

The resolution, sponsored by the “squad” of health aficionado states – Cuba, Iraq, Lebanon, “Palestine,” Qatar, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey, and surprisingly supported by France, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Japan, India, New Zealand, Luxembourg, and Monaco – calls inter alia for the provision of support to the Palestinian health services, including through “capacity-building programs.”. It calls for ensuring sustainable procurement of vaccines, medicine, and medical equipment to the “occupied Palestinian territory” in compliance with international humanitarian law and WHO norms and standards.

It requests the WHO director-general to provide health-related technical assistance to the Syrian population in the “occupied Syrian Golan,” as well as “necessary technical assistance in order to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people, including prisoners and detainees, in cooperation with the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as the health needs of handicapped and injured people.”

While such a resolution calling for medical support for the Palestinians, or for any other people or country is not, in and of itself, problematic in an assembly of states concerned with world health, the fact is this is the sole resolution of the World Health Assembly directed at a particular state – Israel.  It represents a cynical form of selective political manipulation of the WHO as an organization and an abuse of the bona fides of the representatives of states – more often than not medical experts devoted to their profession – attending the assembly at such a crucial period of COVID 19.

This is especially the case in light of the widely acknowledged, concerted efforts and coordination between the Israeli and Palestinian health authorities in dealing with the COVID 19 pandemic, and the fact that Palestinians receive care at Israeli hospitals on a regular basis and that Syrians wounded in that country’s civil war were even treated in Israeli health facilities.

The overwhelming need for the WHO to concentrate all its efforts focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic and other vital global health priorities and emergencies facing the international community, rather than singling out Israel, places considerable doubt on the credibility of the organization at such a vital time.

### Conclusion

Sadly, the annual Israel-bashing festival in the UN and its specialized agencies appears to have become an accepted evil within organized international society, to which most observers pay minimal if any serious attention.

However, at a time when peace and normalization between Israel and Arab states are developing, and the tragic realities of years-gone-by are being replaced by a new Middle East reality, it is high time that the UN, its specialized international agencies, and the member states that compose these organizations reform their policies, examine their decision-making processes, and seriously review this annual and redundant Israel-bashing parade.