UN sinks to a new low with BDS-inspired blacklist

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The stench of anti-Semitism always hovers over Switzerland’s Lake Geneva when the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is meeting there. The foul emanations reached a new nadir last week with UNHRC’s publication of a “database” of companies doing business in the disputed territories in Israel.

Following the publication of the list, Bruno Stagno Ugarte, deputy director for advocacy of NGO Human Rights Watch, stated, “The long-awaited release of the U.N. settlement business database should put all companies on notice: To do business with illegal settlements [sic] is to aid in the commission of war crimes.”

Ponder that: For the 112 companies on the list—including 18 foreign companies, like General Mills, Airbnb and Expedia—to do business in Judea and Samaria (the “West Bank” to the UN) is a war crime.

But what exactly is the crime here? Employing 20,000 Palestinian Arabs as managers, software engineers and in other capacities for triple the pay offered by local Arab businesses, and with far better health and other benefits?

Or perhaps it is a war crime for the wily Israelis and others to have Palestinian Arab and Jewish Israeli workers learn to view each other as colleagues and friends, rather than as adversaries.

In the eyes of the United Nations, it is a war crime to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into the financially distressed disputed territories. And it is especially a war crime for Jews or other “outsiders” to make a profit in the sacred land of “Palestine.” In no other disputed area of the world does the UNHRC address this issue, much less treat it as a war crime.

The United States appropriately denounced this BDS-inspired blacklist with utter disdain. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo flatly rejected the UNHRC’s effort to defame Israel. In addition, it is worth noting that various federal laws and 28 states’ statutes specifically prevent any action by American firms to participate in a boycott action related to the UNHCR list.

Unsurprisingly, the Palestinian Authority celebrated the UNHRC’s publication of the blacklist.

P.A. Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh pledged that the blacklisted companies would be “pursued through international legal institutions and in courts … for taking part in human rights violations in Palestine.” He further demanded that blacklisted companies immediately close offices, branches and headquarters located on “Palestinian land.”

So once again, the Palestinian leadership is demanding action to harm its own people, and diminish the chances of fruitful negotiations with Israel in the future.

Many European countries reacted negatively to the release of the blacklist, and in fact the decision to compile and publish the database was backed solely by nations belonging to the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and a handful of dictatorships, which dominate the 47-member UNHRC. Included in this human-rights-defending world body are paragons of tolerance such as Libya, Venezuela, Cuba, Somalia, Eritrea, Angola, Afghanistan, Sudan and Pakistan.

Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley announced American withdrawal from the UNHRC two years ago, due to its obsessive pursuit of Israel: Since its inception, the only standing UNHRC agenda item at each of its three sessions per year is the notorious Item Seven, calling for a review and action related to Israel and Palestine.

True to its obsessive agenda, in 2019, UNHRC issued 18 resolutions condemning Israel. The rest of the world’s nearly 200 nations—despite their energetic efforts at human-rights abuses—could only garner a measly seven condemnations from UNHRC.

The United Nations has become a cesspool of anti-Semitic misbehavior. Israel, sadly, cannot expect justice in any form from the United Nations or its agencies, and must ignore—and vigilantly combat—the string of biased, hateful actions emanating from this morally bankrupt organization.