**New Zealand Pulls Out Of Durban III Over Anti-Semitism**

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New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Murray McCully announced on Friday that New Zealand will boycott the Durban III conference on September 22 because the anti-racism event is plagued by anti-Semitism.

In a statement issued to *The Jerusalem Post* on Friday, McCully said: "We remain concerned that the commemoration of the 2001 Durban Declaration could re-open the offensive and anti-Semitic debates which undermined the original World Conference. For these reasons, we have decided not to participate.”

He added that "New Zealand is fully committed to combating racism and we agree the UN should lead discussions on the elimination of racism. That is why we engaged constructively in the preparatory discussions in New York. However, in the end, the text is not one that we could support.”

The New Zealand Foreign Affairs Ministry statement said “New Zealand joins a growing list of countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Israel and the USA, that have also indicated they will not participate in the event.

New Zealand did not participate in the Durban Review Conference held in 2009.”

Meanwhile, the *Post*has learned that Denmark, Romania, and France plan to participate. The Hungarian government is waiting for a unified European Union position, which is non-existent at this stage because of the expanding list of EU countries that have pulled out of Durban III.

A spokeswoman for the Danish Embassy in Berlin told the *Post*on Friday that Denmark “is expected to participate in Durban III.”

In an e-mail to the *Post*on Friday, Gabriela Butu, a spokeswoman for the Romanian Embassy in Berlin wrote, “Romania participated in both the 2001 World Conference against Racism (Durban) and 2009 Durban Review Conference (Geneva), based on its strong commitment to support international efforts in the field of combating discrimination, in all its forms and manifestations, as well as on its determination to contribute to the global fight against the scourge of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.”

Butu continued that “Romania shares the view that this process should respect existing international standards on fundamental freedoms and human rights and should avoid politicization. Pending further developments, Romania will be represented at the meeting at the level of the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York.”

According to a French source familiar with the discussion in Paris concerning Durban III, there is “no decision at the moment whether” France will participate. The French source, who wished to remain anonymous because of the sensitivity of the talks, said France, however, is “likely to participate.”

Mr. Zoltán Kovács, the Hungarian government international spokesperson, told the *Post*on Friday, "Hungary shares the deep concern that despite many efforts, the objective to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance has not yet been attained. Together with many partners, the European Union will remain engaged in efforts at the national, regional and international level to fight racism in an effective and sustainable manner.“

Kovács added, "Therefore, Hungary participated in the 2001 Durban conference and also attended the 2009 follow-up event. As far as participation in the commemorative GA meeting is concerned, Hungary will consult its EU and NATO allies.”

Anne Bayefsky, an expert on international human rights law and lead organizer of a conference opposing the Durban III event, told the *Post*on Friday, “New Zealand has done exactly the right thing by pulling out of Durban III and refusing to legitimize what is clearly a campaign by extremists inside the UN to undermine Israel, democracy and the genuine protection of human rights.”

Bayefsky added that ,“It is time for other democracies Hungary, Greece, Spain - that are serious about human rights and object to anti-Semitism and the ages-old demonization of the Jewish people, to get off the fence. Join the leaders of the free word like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and so many more - and say no to Durban III. No more should it be acceptable for anti-Semitism to be espoused and championed in the corridors of power, let alone at the United Nations which was built on the ashes of the Jewish people.”

Rabbi Abraham Cooper ,from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told the *Post*on Friday that "it was clear from the first day of opening UN World Conference Against Racism in South Africa ten years ago that the so-called Durban process was fatally flawed. Instead of being a sounding board for the voiceless victims of racism around the world, it served as a platform for vitriolic attacks on Israel, the US and the West. At Durban II, instead of showing solidarity with the freedom-starved people of Iran, it handed over its podium to [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad to spit in the face of founding principles of the United Nations."

Cooper continued, “Now some European countries who should know better, duck their responsibilities behind the diplomatic skirt of the European Union. Let us be clear, the EU along with the US and Canada should take the necessary steps to defund the Durban process and instead invest our dwindling financial resources to help the true victims of racism and tyranny in Iran, North Korea and Africa.”

At the 2009 Durban II event, Ahmadinejad denied the Holocaust and proclaimed the Jewish state “illegitimate” and “criminal.” He called for the obliteration of Israel and Zionism, declaring, “Governments must be encouraged and supported in their fights at eradicating this barbaric racism. Efforts must be made to put an end to Zionism.”

The Iranian leader turned the UN-sponsored Durban II conference ,according to critics, into a stage for Holocaust denial, saying that Israel was “created on the pretext of Jewish suffering from World War II.”