Why Trump Should Withdraw the U.S. From the U.N. Human Rights Council

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Would the United States remain a member of an organization that condemned it for human rights abuses more frequently than it did [Syria, North Korea, and Iran](https://www.unwatch.org/report-in-9-years-existence-unhrc-condemned-israel-more-times-than-rest-of-world-combined/)? Would it stay in a forum that denounced the U.S. more often than it did all other countries in the world?

The answer to these questions, irrespective of one’s political affiliation, would certainly be “no.” And yet, the United States is currently a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council that does precisely that to Israel, America’s foremost democratic Middle Eastern ally.  Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, America’s ambassador to UNHCR from 2010 to 2013, deplored its “biased and disproportionate focus on Israel.” By example, she cited [an anti-Israel resolution](http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-rights-body-criticizes-israel-over-settlements/) sponsored by Syria at a time when it was butchering its own people.

But the anti-Israel bias was built into the council from its founding in 2006. Item 7 of its agenda calls for reviewing “human rights violations and implications of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people,” at each of its three annual meetings. It also appoints a Special Rapporteur “on the situation of human rights in the territories occupied since 1967.” Over the past nine years, the UNHRC has condemned [Israel 61 times](https://www.unwatch.org/report-in-9-years-existence-unhrc-condemned-israel-more-times-than-rest-of-world-combined/), as opposed to its 16 resolutions on Syria and five on Iran. Denunciations of Israel outnumber those of all other countries combined.

This imbalance is all the more obscene given Israel's extraordinary human rights record. Though situated in the world's most unstable and violent region, Israel maintains a universally-respected and independent judicial system. Its Declaration of Independence promises all citizens full equality irrespective of “religion, race, or sex." Along with the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and Canada, Israel is one of the few nations never to have known a moment of non-democratic rule—and the only one never to have known peace. In Israel's parliament, the Knesset, Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze freely—and loudly—debate all issues. More admirably still, such discussions take place only a few hours' drive from where hundreds of thousands of innocent people have been massacred.

Admittedly, Israel must grapple with discrimination and the moral challenges of defending itself against terrorists who hide behind civilian populations. Mistakes have been made, especially in the heat of battle. And there remains the complex issue of the West Bank and its Israeli communities, which can be resolved should the Palestinians agree to return to negotiations. Nevertheless, Israel has upheld its commitment to human rights and rigorously worked to guarantee freedom for minority groups and the LGBTQ community. Yet all of those achievements have been ignored by the UNHRC and replaced by libels.

Repelled by this bigotry, as well by the rights-violating regimes that often chaired its sessions, the Bush Administration refrained from appointing an ambassador to the council. That decision was [reversed by President Obama](http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2029826,00.html), however, who believed that a U.S. presence on the body could redress some of its injustices, including that toward Israel. The decision disheartened Israelis who believed that America's involvement would only legitimize the council's prejudice. Unfortunately, our concern proved justified. Throughout the Obama years, UNHRC denouncements of Israel only multiplied.

Now the United States is once again rethinking its position. On March 1, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Erin Barclay said the U.S. remained “deeply troubled by the council's unfair and unbalanced focus on one democratic country, Israel.” Such a position, if it resulted in a return to America's previous boycott of the council, would be warmly welcomed by Israel.

Israel is, of course, the Jewish State, and throughout history, there has been a name for the singling out and demonization of Jews. It's call anti-Semitism. By fixating on Israel and its alleged abuses, UNHRC fits the definition of anti-Semitism. The fact that the United States not only helps fund this racist body but is formally represented on it, should be reprehensible to all Americans.

As a nation aspiring to the highest standards of human rights, Israel of course supports any organization seeking to preserve them. That organization is emphatically not the UNHRC. At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise in Europe as well as in the United States, withdrawal from the council would reaffirm America's determination to stand up to hatred against Jews and any ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Quitting the UNHRC would send a moral message to the world.