B'nai B'rith Welcomes Report That U.S. Will Not Participate in U.N. Event Commemorating Notorious Durban Conference

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**B’nai B’rith**

<https://www.bnaibrith.org/press-releases/bnai-brith-welcomes-report-that-us-will-not-participate-in-un-event-commemorating-notorious-durban-conference>

On August 31, B’nai B’rith Will Lead Communal Response to 20th Anniversary of Event Poisoned by Anti-Semitism

**B’nai B’rith President Charles O. Kaufman and CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin have issued the following statement:**

B’nai B’rith International, which brought the largest multinational Jewish delegations to the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, and its follow-up meetings in 2009, strongly commends the United States for having reportedly committed not to take part in a United Nations summit marking the event’s 20th anniversary in September. The 2001 conference was poisoned by manifestations of virulent anti-Zionism and open anti-Semitism.

B’nai B’rith, which has led Jewish engagement at the U.N. since the world body’s founding in 1945, will spearhead the community’s response to the forthcoming summit with a major event on August 31.

Over the past year, B’nai B’rith—which also organized a high-level event in New York upon Durban’s 10th anniversary in 2011—has worked to ensure continued awareness of Durban’s toxic legacy by speaking publicly on the topic at U.N. forums, publishing relevant commentary and privately reminding ambassadors from around the world that the fight against racism must not be undercut by crass politicization and outright bigotry.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action singled out only one country—the world’s only Jewish state and the Middle East’s only pluralistic democracy, Israel—for obscene implied characterization as racist. The 2001 conference’s NGO Forum went even further, defaming Israel alone as a “racist apartheid state”—and urging discrimination against those engaging with it—while Jewish participants were subjected to shocking physical and verbal abuse. As a result, B’nai B’rith led a Jewish walkout at Durban—joined ultimately by key democratic countries. The subsequent 2009 Durban Review Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, was nonetheless addressed by Holocaust-denying Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

B’nai B’rith salutes the U.S. administration for taking a principled decision, like its predecessors, to deny legitimacy to a U.N. framework that purports to fight prejudice but is fundamentally marred by it.

We urge all countries of goodwill to do similarly—and we will continue to insist that all forms of hate, including those targeting Jews, not be given a platform by foremost international institutions.

B’nai B’rith International has advocated for global Jewry and championed the cause of human rights since 1843. B’nai B’rith is recognized as a vital voice in promoting Jewish unity and continuity, a staunch defender of the State of Israel, a tireless advocate on behalf of senior citizens and a leader in disaster relief. With a presence around the world, we are the Global Voice of the Jewish Community. Visit [*bnaibrith.org*](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cswillig123%5CDownloads%5Cwww.bnaibrith.org).