Western nations de-facto boycott condemnation of Israel at UNHCR

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<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/West-holds-de-facto-boycott-of-UNHRCs-Agenda-Item-7-debate-561397>

Western nations held a defacto boycott of the Agenda Item 7 debate against Israel at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday.

Only 22%, 43 nations out of the 193 UN countries who could have taken the floor, stood up to condemn Israel.

France, which had initially signed up to speak, changed its mind at the last moment and was not present in the room when its name was called.

The silence marked a slim sign of continued success for the Israeli and US campaign to abolish the UNRHC mandate that requires a debate on Israeli actions against the Palestinians at every council session under Agenda Item 7.

All other alleged human rights abuses around the globe are dealt with under Agenda Item 4, save for Israel, which is the only country with a permanent dedicated agenda item.

This spring the US had unsuccessfully pushed for a UN General Assembly resolution to eliminate Agenda Item 7 before deciding to quit the UNHRC last month.

But in the last five years, European and Western countries, even those among Israel’s harshest critics such as Ireland, have increasingly refrained from speaking under Agenda Item 7.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry had no comment about the small showing of speakers for Monday’s debate during the UNHRC’s 38th session, which ends this week.

Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan, however, tweeted a comment during the debate.

“Shame on every country that takes part in this #WorldCup of hate! Every country that cares about HR [human rights] must leave the #UNHRC until #item 7 is history.”

Israel and the US were absent from the room altogether, but a number of Western countries remained in the room.

Palestinian Authority Ambassador Ibrahim Khraishi thanked those states who engaged with the “general debate of Item 7 [against] the will and wish of the occupying power to not participate in the debate on this item which deals with the illegal practices of the occupation and the refusal to comply with international humanitarian law.”

Those who support Israeli violations against the Palestinian people “should withdraw from the council and not come back until they change this approach that is destructive of law and morality and principles, and adds more radicalism and promotes terrorism,” Khraishi said.

The US, he said, participates in Israeli “violations,” including the relocation of its embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv in May.

He also called on the UNHRC to finish its database of companies doing business with firms in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Later in the day, under Agenda Item 9, Hungary delivered a strong statement against antisemitism, stating that like other forms of discrimination, it “poses a threat to the peaceful enjoyment of human rights of all peoples but also contributes to the evolution of a hostile climate feeding on extremism, terrorism and criminality.”

“The worrying rise of antisemitic hatred and violence, however, is not a problem for Jewish communities alone but an affront against humanity that affects the societies in which it rises and which needs to be countered by the international community as a whole.”