

20th April 2023

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UN MANDATE HOLDERS' URGENT DISMISSAL REQUEST

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Federazione delle Associazioni Italia Israele, representing 41 Italy-Israel Friendship Associations, dedicated to fight against antisemitism as well and on behalf of the AJC American Jewish Committee for Italy. We are calling on you because we are deeply concerned about the positions and declarations held and made by some UN High Mandate holders, who do not even partially comply with the fundamental rules of neutrality, objectivity, independence and personal integrity demanded of those who are committed to high levels of UN responsibilities. We are asking of you to please take a stand on this regretful and shameful situation.

The three appointed members of the International Commission of Inquiry for investigation in “the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,” and in Israel (which, by itself, represents a shameful unicum in the history of international organizations), Navy Pillay, Chris Sidoti and Miloon Kothari have expressed antisemitic positions and strong bias against Israel.

Mrs. Pillay, at the head of the COI, has gone so far as to ask that Israel be prevented from using the Iron Dome to protect its population from rockets launching. She has permitted the appointment of Richard Falk as the Special Rapporteur for the Palestinians. Mr. Falk is notorious for his biased statements – such as likening Israel's treatment of the Palestinians to the Shoah, and for having convened the 2009 Durban II conference which was boycotted by most democracies. That conference provided Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with a prominent platform on which to spread antisemitic hatred.

Mr Miloon Khotari has many a time declared the social media to be in the hands of “Jewish lobbies” and questioned the very right of Israel to be a member state of the UN. He and Mr. Sidoti even accuse Israel of preventing the regular functioning of the UN.

Mr. Chris Sidoti always refers to the terror attacks that strike Israelis as “resistance”. He never identifies the killings of innocent Israeli citizens as the terror attacks that they are. Nor do any of these UN officials ever speak of the aggressions of Hamas or even of Hamas' oppression of the Palestinian population. Their rhetoric stresses only bias against Israel and cannot but cause hatred and further violence. Not to mention that the best admirers of the three are Iran and Syria, no champions in human rights. The Iranian representative in the General Assembly stated, “The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses support for the work of the Commission of Inquiry ... The brutal Israeli regime has resorted to a new law in order to hinder the Commission's work and its cooperation with civil society...” He then asked, “Madam Pillay, in your opinion, how critical is the role of civil society in resolving the question of Palestine?”

These officials are all utterly unqualified and therefore incapable of fulfilling the COI mandate in accordance with UN mandatory rules.

The same verdict of “unfit for the job” should be made with regard to Ms. Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, whose lack of objectivity, neutrality and impartiality is blatant. Her statements are full of harsh bias solely against Israel. Her antisemitic rhetoric is shocking and in full breach of the UN Code of Conduct. Her history of antisemitic and anti-Israel propaganda should clearly have prevented her being appointed to such a delicate mandate where impartiality and neutrality are mandatory. In 2014 she described the US and Europe as being “dominated by the Jewish lobby”, an ancient yet enduring obscene anti-semitic accusation. Her rhetoric regarding the Israeli lobby being motivated by “greed” is blatant. She even compared Israelis to Nazis and regularly speaks of Israel as operating not just a military occupation but a settler-colonial enterprise in which Jews are “foreign interlopers subjugating an indigenous Palestinian population”. Again, a few days ago, on the terrorist killing of two young Israeli sisters and their mother, she tweeted that “Israel has a right to defend itself but can’t claim it when it comes to the people it oppresses/whose lands it colonizes”. Such statements can easily lead to authorizing and legitimizing new terror attacks against israeli civilians considered as alleged “oppressors”. She expresses no pity for the poor victims. She has retweeted posts posted from ex UN Official John Dugard that “Israeli crimes and Israeli apartheid are infinitely far worse than those committed by the apartheid regime of South Africa”. When John Dugard in 2008 was Special Rapporteur on Palestine, he insisted that “Palestinian terrorism is the ‘inevitable consequence’ of Israeli actions”.

On the day the young italian lawyer Alessandro Parini was killed in Tel Aviv in a terror attack, Francesca Albanese just posted on social media that she grieved, but spent not a word about the cause or the responsibility of the killing. She never addresses a recommendation to Palestinians, she never uses the word “terrorism”. We must ask how come the list of UN Rapporteurs on Palestine with blatant antisemitic bias is growing longer? How is it possible for a Special Rapporteur on Palestine, whose neutrality and integrity should be deemed strict and thorough, to make serious statements that definitely fall under at least three IHRA antisemitic examples (Israelis are the same as the Nazis, the degrading of the Shoah and Israel as a racist endeavour)?

The above-mentioned UN representatives must all be called to resign or be dismissed. There must be no room for antisemitic bias or propaganda within the UN Institutions and there must be no room within the UN Institutions for stained appointments or outrageous mandate holders. It is the UN’s very credibility together with the values of democracy, coexistence in peace and the strength of international law to be at stake.

Thank you.

Yours respectfully.



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