U.N. Support for Palestinian Lawfare Against Israel Sparks Anger on Capitol Hill

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By [Jenna Lifhits](http://www.weeklystandard.com/author/jenna-lifhits)

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The United Nations is earmarking millions of dollars for Palestinian efforts to pursue international legal action against Israel over the next four years, triggering outrage on and off Capitol Hill and fueling calls to re-examine U.S. funding of the U.N.

The allocations are described in a U.N. [document](http://www.ps.undp.org/content/dam/papp/docs/Publications/UNDP-papp-research-undaf_2018-2022.pdf) that lays out development assistance for the Palestinian Authority. According to the U.N. Developmental Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the support will include training and technical advice so that Palestinians can "effectively access international accountability mechanisms” and “hold Israel accountable for its violations under international law."

Texas senator Ted Cruz sharply condemned the move and vowed to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to pay for its realization.

"This is yet another example of the U.N.’s shameful hostility towards Israel, which encourages more false attacks, accusations, and criticism of our close ally," he told TWS. "I will continue to press all legislative options to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are not used to implement, facilitate, or carry out this discriminatory plan undermining Israel."

In addition to bolstering Palestinian legal efforts against Israel, the U.N. said it “will also strengthen its own advocacy on the impact of Israeli violations,” according to the framework document. The current UNDAF is a replacement of the 2014 agreement, which does not appear to explicitly harp on legal recourse against Israel.

The Trump administration has been critical of the U.N.’s “anti-Israel bias,” [citing it as a reason](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/12/us/politics/trump-unesco-withdrawal.html) for withdrawing from Unesco, the United Nations’ cultural arm. U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley has also repeatedly [condemned](https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7828) the U.N. Human Rights Council for attacking Israel while letting Iranian or Venezuelan violations slide.

Republicans in Congress have applauded Trump's willingness to push back against anti-Israel action at the United Nations. Cruz urged the administration on Monday to continue to do so.

"The United States should use its leverage as the U.N.’s largest contributor to forcefully counter the organization’s systematic bias, lawfare, and delegitimization campaign against Israel," he said.

More than a dozen U.N. agencies signed the development assistance report, which was crafted with the help of a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promote anti-Semitism and the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, according to a pro-Israel watchdog.