Israel pushes back against UN drive to strip its right to self-defense

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Israel has sent an urgent letter to 26 foreign ministers asking that their countries oppose a United Nations Human Rights Council drive to strip Israel of its right to self-defense.

Acting Foreign Minister Israel Katz sent the letter on Tuesday in advance of a UNHRC vote later this week by the 47-member body. It is poised to approve a controversial report on the Palestinian Gaza border protests, known as the “Great March of Return.”

The three-member investigatory commission that authored the report compiled a secret dossier of Israelis, who it says may be culpable for war crimes suits. The commission asked UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet to pass that dossier to the International Criminal Court.

The report also calls for financial sanctions and an arms embargo against Israel in situations where the funds or arms would be used to violate international humanitarian law.

“This is another initiative of the Human Rights Council’s theater of the absurd,” Katz wrote.

“We will not accept a situation in which an automatic majority of hostile countries converts the victim of Hamas’s aggression into the guilty party and tries to deprive Israel of its right to self-defense,” he said. “We demand that the friendly member countries of the council will oppose the decision on the report, which harms the only democracy in the Middle East and encourages the continuation of Hamas’s infamous terrorism.”

While the report mentions Hamas violence against Israel, it does not speak of its actions as possible war crimes.
It further accuses Israel of deliberately targeting innocent Palestinians.

“The mandate of the commission is biased and distorted. In fact, the commission intended to harm Israel in advance,” Katz said.

“The report ignores Hamas’s involvement in Palestinian violence” and “violates Israel’s right to defend itself and its citizens,” Katz said.