Report: UN-Accredited NGOs Are Promoting Incitement, Violence Against Israel

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United Nations-accredited civil society groups are spreading messages of incitement, antisemitism and the promotion of terrorism against Israel, according to a new report due for release on Thursday.

In doing so, the report charges, the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are violating the terms of their original accreditation with the world body – yet despite mandatory periodic reviews by the responsible U.N. committee, their status remains intact.

The report ([PDF](http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/assets/images/panels/list_10/Report-on-UN-NGOs-Spreading-Antisemitism-Terror-September-2016.pdf)), compiled by Human Rights Voices and the Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, includes numerous examples of statements, images and other material disseminated and made publicly available by U.N.-accredited NGOs, including on U.N.-accredited websites or at U.N.-accredited events.

The examples are classified broadly under materials inciting hate or encouraging antisemitism; condoning or justifying violence and terror; demonizing Israel; and delegitimizing and seeking the Jewish state’s destruction.

One example: a [speech](http://www.ihrc.org.uk/news/comment/10700-the-palestinian-genocide-by-israel) disseminated by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, a U.N.-accredited NGO, includes allegations of an Israeli “final solution” to the Palestinian question constituting “genocide, whether slow-motion or in blood-thirsty spurts of violence.”

Another U.N.-accredited NGO, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was founded at an [event](http://www.eaford.org/publications/1/ZIONISM%20%26%20RACISM.pdf) in Libya whose opening address equated Zionism with Nazism, and included references to “devilish schemes which generate chaos all over the world,” and a “beastly octopus which has almost a decisive role in directing the policies of the greatest countries in the world.”

A 2011 [document](http://eaford.org/en_statements/2011PalestineHopesFrustrationsAndHypocrisy.htm) by the same group accused Israeli troops of “extracting human organs from killed Palestinians,” while a U.N.-accredited NGO called the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture delivered a [statement](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/31/NGO/30) at the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva early this year, accusing Israel of trying “to slowly kill prisoners by using medical negligence intentionally.”

“The Israeli occupation is the world’s only entity in which doctors torture and blackmail prisoners,” the statement alleged.

Numerous of the NGO statements and documents cited in Thursday’s report accuse Israel of “apartheid” and “ethnic cleansing,” or equate its policies to those of the Nazis.

The authors of the report are critical not just of the identified NGOs, but also of the U.N. and member states.

“The buck stops with U.N. member states, who are the ones charged with the responsibility of awarding or continuing U.N. accreditation for NGOs in the first place,” said human rights law expert Anne Bayefsky, president of Human Rights Voices and director of the Touro Institute.

“U.N. member states that underwrite the United Nations are currently underwriting a burgeoning global network of intolerance and incitement to violent extremism,” she said.

“These states have the power and the duty – in the name of the foundational principles of the United Nations – to put an end to this affront to the dignity and the security of every human being and to the equality of nations large and small,” Bayefsky added, alluding to wording in the [preamble](http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/) of the U.N. Charter.

Officially, U.N.-accredited NGOs are [required](http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm) to have aims and purposes that are “in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

Privileges and benefits

NGOs accredited by the U.N. enjoy significant privileges and benefits, including the right to take part in sessions of several U.N. organs, such as the Human Rights Council – and to have their statements there translated and broadcast via U.N. webcasts. They may also hold events in U.N. premises, and in some cases U.N. websites carry direct links to accredited NGOs’ websites.

The decisions on which groups are granted “consultative status” or other official accreditation, as well as subsequent periodic reviews of the approved NGOs, are the responsibility of the NGO Committee, a 19-country body that is a subsidiary of the U.N.’s 54-member Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The NGO Committee has come under fire over the years over some of its decisions on approving or rejecting NGOs’ applications.

Last year it approved a British NGO [with alleged links to the Palestinian terrorist group](http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/un-body-grants-formal-recognition-hamas-linked-group), Hamas; while in May this year it [rejected an application](http://cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/controversial-un-committee-kills-accreditation-application-press) from the Committee to Protect Journalists. (The CPJ decision was [overturned](https://cpj.org/2016/07/un-committee-grants-cpj-accreditation.php) in a full ECOSOC vote in July.)

Some of the NGO Committee’s more controversial decisions have been attributed by critics to the fact it includes countries with autocratic governments. Current members include China, Cuba, Russia, Sudan, Pakistan, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Azerbaijan and Burundi.

American taxpayers account for 22 percent of the regular budget of the U.N., which includes its major organs like ECOSOC.

“Democratic states, led by the United States, control the purse strings of the United Nations either from within the U.N. bureaucracy or through domestic policy,” said Bayefsky.

“Getting serious about combating the spread of intolerance and violent extremism means putting an immediate stop to the use and abuse of the United Nations to broadcast and support xenophobia and its lethal consequences.”