Envoy Hits Back at UN Chief for Calling Netanyahu Video ‘Outrageous’

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<http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-calls-ethnic-cleansing-video-unacceptable-outrageous-2/>

The Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon hit back at UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Thursday for his [criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-calls-ethnic-cleansing-video-unacceptable-outrageous) over a recent video in which Netanyahu said that Palestinians seek the “ethnic cleansing” of Jews from the West Bank.

Ban had called Netanyahu’s remarks disturbing, and his portrayal of “those who oppose settlement expansion as supporters of ethnic cleansing” as “outrageous and unacceptable.” The UN chief also reiterated the UN position that settlement expansion in the West Bank were an obstacle to peace.

Danon said Ban’s remarks on the situation, in a speech before the UN Security Council, presented “a distorted view of the situation.”

“The obstacle to peace starts and ends with Palestinian incitement to terrorism and [Palestinian Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas’s refusal to meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu,” Danon said in a statement issued to the press.

“Instead of directly condemning Hamas and its building of terror tunnels, and instead of investing time and resources in ensuring that the Palestinians end their incitement, the secretary general chooses to condemn Israel on a regular basis.”

In his wide-ranging remarks earlier, Ban had also criticized Palestinians for what he said was the “glorification of terror.”

“I continue to be appalled that Palestinian parties choose to praise despicable acts, such as the 1972 terrorist attack against Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. The glorification of terror is disgraceful and the Palestinian leadership must put an end to it,” he said.

The UN chief also said he was concerned by the recent cancellation of planned local elections in the Palestinian territories, and condemned the firing of a rocket from Gaza into Israel.

On Wednesday, Ban also expressed disapproval with the video, which was posted by Netanyahu’s office late last week.

In the clip, Netanyahu asked whether people in other parts of the world would accept demands for the removal of a specific ethnic group in their own countries, saying Palestinians were demanding that no Jews be allowed to reside in their territory.

It’s “outrageous that the world doesn’t find it outrageous,” Netanyahu said, urging viewers to ask themselves whether they would accept “a territory without Jews, without Hispanics, without blacks” in their nation. “Since when is bigotry a foundation for peace?” he asked.

The Obama administration last week [described the comments as “inappropriate.”](http://www.timesofisrael.com/washington-calls-netanyahus-ethnic-cleansing-video-inappropriate/)

“We believe that using that type of terminology is inappropriate and unhelpful,” State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said.

The video also drew angry denunciations from Israeli Arabs and Palestinian leaders, with PA President Mahmoud Abbas accusing Israel of carrying out ethnic cleansing.

Israel began building settlements in the West Bank after it captured the territory, previously controlled by Jordan, in the 1967 Six Day War. Today, over 350,000 Israelis live in West Bank settlements and outposts and another 200,000 in East Jerusalem, which Israel considers part of its territory.

The international community considers Israeli building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem illegal. Jerusalem argues the status of West Bank settlements is subject to a final peace deal with the Palestinians.