**Another U.N. Human Rights Fraud**

February 5, 2015

Wall Street Journal http://www.wsj.com/articles/another-u-n-human-rights-fraud-1423180155

Canadian law professor William Schabas resigned this week as chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry into the 2014 Gaza conflict. He did so after Israeli diplomats revealed he was paid by the Palestine Liberation Organization to render an opinion on the legal consequences of a U.N. General Assembly resolution upgrading “Palestine” to a nonmember state. Now there’s a nonsurprise.

When the conflict of interest came to light last week, Mr. Schabas insisted his 2012 work for the Palestinians was purely “academic.” But by Monday he had resigned his U.N. post. In his resignation letter, he blamed his departure on “Israel’s campaign against the Commission of Inquiry on the Gaza Conflict” rather than his own failure to disclose a material conflict of interest.

Mr. Schabas, who teaches law at Middlesex University in London, should never have been tapped for the job. His public statements on Israel made clear he wouldn’t be an unbiased fact-finder. At the 2012 Russell Tribunal, a self-appointed inquiry convened by anti-Israel activists, Mr. Schabas mused about world leaders who should face trial at the International Criminal Court: “My favorite would be [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu.” In an interview published in 2010 in a Greek journal, he asked: “Why are we going after the president of Sudan for Darfur and not the president of Israel for Gaza?”

The inquiry was formed to investigate war crimes during last summer’s Gaza conflict, which broke out after the Gaza-based terror group Hamas fired rockets at Israeli population centers. Yet the U.N. wanted to investigate only Israel. The resolution creating the investigating panel condemned “gross violations of international human rights and fundamental freedoms arising from the Israeli military operations” without mentioning Hamas.

That’s a problem, because genuine rights abuses worthy of investigation include Hamas’s placement of rocket launchers in schools and hospitals and its strategy of firing on Israeli civilians. As welcome as it is, Mr. Schabas’s departure won’t salvage the credibility of a commission that has been politicized from the start.