‘When it’s Israeli women or Jewish women, they don’t believe it,’ activist says of United Nations

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U.N. Women regularly issues statements condemning specific instances of violence and abuse of women worldwide. But it took this agency of the United Nations, which purports to advocate for gender equity and female empowerment, nearly 50 days to condemn Hamas terrorists for raping and sexually assaulting Israeli and other women, which video footage and witnesses documented on Oct. 7.

‘Me, too, unless you are a Jew!’ was among the rallying cries, as some 100 women protested on Monday morning outside the New York City headquarters of U.N. Women.

‘We came here to demand from them to speak up and to condemn the horrific acts that Israeli women, Muslim women, Jewish women, Thai women, American women, German women went through on Oct. 7 by Hamas terrorists,’ Shany Grubot-Lubaton, one of the protest organizers, told JNS.

‘It seems like they forgot that they’re fighting for all women,’ she said of the U.N. agency. ‘If they’re not fighting for all women, then they’re fighting for none.’

Almost immediately after it posted on Instagram—’We condemn the brutal attacks by Hamas on October 7 and continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages’—U.N. Women [deleted](https://themessenger.com/news/un-women-condemnation-of-hamas-then-immediately-deletes-it) it.

It replaced the post on Instagram [and X](https://twitter.com/UN_Women/status/1728262284537925701) with a broader statement: ‘We met with Israeli women’s organizations and heard about the work of the civil commission for crimes against women and children. We remain alarmed by gender-based violence reports on 7 Oct. and call for rigorous investigation, prioritizing the rights, needs and safety of those affected.’

The second post mentioned neither Hamas nor Jewish victims.

Those gathered on Monday were dressed in white with red paint symbolizing blood splattered near their groin and other areas. The protesters carried signs demanding ‘Believe all women’ and ‘Rape is rape.’

One sign—’Your silence is loud’—was directed at Sima Bahous, a Jordanian woman who serves as the executive director of U.N. Women.

Bahous remained silent in response to a JNS request for comment.

**‘Shame on them’**

Granot-Lubaton told JNS that she is disappointed that the international community supporting women’s rights and safety, which Jewish women have backed on many issues for many years, is failing to come to the aid of Israelis.

‘Last Saturday was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and they did not speak up,’ she said. ‘They had all these conferences and roundtables and events, but not one word against these horrible acts that’s been just recently committed on Israel land and it’s a real shame on them.’

Granot-Lubaton told JNS that it is painful to be abandoned.

‘We stood with the U.N. Women in every fight they had—for Iranian women, for abortion rights. We’ve always stood together as women for women’s rights,’ she said Granot-Lubaton. ‘Now we stand alone, and this is a heartbreaking moment.’

Yaala Ballin, one of the protesters, told JNS that the group isn’t asking U.N. Women to take sides in the war. ‘We don’t see this as part of the conflict,’ she said. ‘This has to be a separate issue.’

The U.N. agency’s coldness is ‘insulting’ and ‘infuriating,’ she stated.

‘These international organizations can be crying out for both sides who are hurt in this, but we don’t see that,’ said Ballin, who added that U.N. Women’s belated call for an investigation into Oct. 7 rings hollow.

‘I think they’re doing the very minimal they can do in the midst of speaking about all the other things that are going on,’ she said. ‘It’s just not enough.’

**‘What is so hard?’**

Lizzy Savetsky, a well-known U.S. Jewish activist, attended Monday’s demonstration and directed her anger at U.N. Women.

‘You exclude me. I am appalled by your indifference. Shame on you for abandoning us,’ she said. ‘Jewish women deserve the same protection as every other woman in the world.’

Granot-Lubaton said a delegation of leaders from Israeli women’s rights organizations will visit the United Nations next week. A simultaneous demonstration in support of Israeli women is planned to take place outside the building.

She told JNS that the United Nations should condemn the sexual violence that occurred on Oct. 7 ‘What is so hard?’ she said. ‘They always say, ‘Believe all women,’ but then when it’s Israeli women or Jewish women, they don’t believe it.’