Undemocratic states have hijacked the UN agenda

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In a world turned upside down, where right and wrong are based on whomever has the loudest voice and the strongest propaganda machine, attacks on democracies and fundamental human rights are becoming commonplace. The decline of democracies and the growing power of totalitarian dictatorships means that countries that are antithetical to freedom and human dignity have ever-increasing power in international organizations.

Last week, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan, criticized the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for its well-documented disproportionate condemnation of Israel. In an impassioned speech to the General Assembly, he tore up the organization’s annual report and called out the UNHRC’s “obsessive anti-Israel bias.”

“Since the establishment of the council 15 years ago, it has decided to blame and condemn Israel not 10 times like Iran or 35 times like Syria,” said Erdan. “The Human Rights Council has attacked Israel with 95 resolutions compared to 142 against all other countries combined.”

No state should be immune to criticism, but the sheer bias and hypocrisy of the United Nations and its affiliate agencies diminishes the organization’s credibility. Though the UN has a critically important role to play in world affairs, especially when it comes to alleviating poverty and war, its credibility wanes when it fails to adhere to its own charter, which champions human rights and freedoms.

An attack on the only democracy in the Middle East is an attack on anyone who cherishes the very principles of freedom and democracy. No other country on earth is put under the magnifying glass in as much as Israel is by the United Nations and its affiliate agencies. No other country is on the permanent agenda of the UNHRC and discussed ad nauseam and investigated relentlessly.

Even the UN-affiliated International Criminal Court relented to Palestinian propaganda by saying it would investigate the Jewish state for alleged war crimes. Yet the same court is refusing to launch a war crimes investigation against Syrian President Bashar Assad, despite documented evidence of his complicity in the gassing and murder of children, women and men during the decade-old civil war in that country.

The General Assembly’s relentless focus on Israel shifts attention from ongoing global human rights travesties almost everywhere on the planet. While the UN devotes much of its human rights work to demonizing Israel, China has steamrolled the last vestiges of Hong Kong democracy and is throwing democrats in jail.

A military coup is unfolding in Sudan and at least three pro-democracy demonstrators were killed and 100 wounded for protesting military rule. Yet the world is silent. A war is raging in Ethiopia’s Tigray region between rebels and the government that has left scores of civilians dead and has left 400,000 people on the brink of famine. Yet the world is silent. In Libya, more than 5,000 refugees and migrants have been arrested by authorities, many of them suffering physical and sexual violence. Yet the world is silent.

What the world is not silent about is Israel. It makes no difference that Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip recently sentenced two men to death on allegations that they collaborated with Israel.

A recent poll published by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Research found that 71 per cent of West Bankers and 62 per cent of Gazans say they fear speaking out against their government. In other words, those in the Palestinian territories live under a constant threat of violence and repression and don’t enjoy the same freedoms as those living in Israel — yet it is the Jewish state that the world is focused on.

The world could not even keep its mouth shut when Israel banned several pro-Palestinian organizations for supporting terrorism.  No other country gets involved in the affairs of national security of another.  Yet for some reason, they are compelled to watch the Jewish state like a hawk and critique its every move.

Ignoring severe and serious human rights issues around the planet while spending undue time, energy and money on Israel not only diminishes the important role the United Nations can play in global affairs, but also turns attention from serious human rights abuses around the world.

The UN has become a political instrument for Israel’s enemies and detractors. And because democracies represent a minority of nations within the organization, their voices have been consistently diminishing. This threatens the very essence of the UN Charter and must be immediately addressed if we are to make the world a better place for everyone.