Israel withholds visas for UN officials accused of pro-Palestinian bias

December 7, 2022

By Itamar Eichner

Ynet News

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/syw8r11cpi>

The Foreign Ministry halted the issuance of entry permits for officials of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) due to what it considers the agency's systematically distorted reports of terrorist attacks in the country.

According to the ministry, OCHA employees consistently undercount Israeli victims of Palestinian terror attacks and fail to classify such attacks accordingly.

The agency is accused of reporting the killing or harming of Israeli civilians under ‘disputed’ circumstances while taking reports about Palestinian casualties at face value and pointing the blame at Israel, including in clashes between IDF forces and armed Palestinian militants.

As reported by Ynet last month, [the agency refused to recognize](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rkfz111zho) the killing of [Shulamit Rachel Ovadia](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/s10kqrdws) by a Palestinian as an act of terrorism, stating that the killer's motives were ‘unclear’.

In another case, the agency described [Eliyahu Kay](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/ZPLJOLQAE), who was murdered last year in the Old City of Jerusalem by a Palestinian gunman, as ‘a settler who was murdered in occupied territory’. However, he lived in Modi'in-Maccabim-Reut, a city within Israel proper.

This is in addition to clear anti-Israeli biases that agency officials present every week in their regular reports to the UN.

Last summer, the agency removed Sarah Muscroft, the head of its branch in the so-called ‘Occupied Palestinian Territory’, from her post after she condemned Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s ‘indiscriminate rocket fire’ in a tweet into Israeli population centers during the most recent Gaza conflict.

Muscroft was transferred following Palestinian pressure. In addition, the agency's Middle East and North Africa arm is headed by a Palestinian who the Foreign Ministry says holds an unneutral view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Gilad Erdan leads a persistent battle against the agency and demands it also includes in its reports stone-throwing and Molotov cocktail attacks against Jews in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Erdan addressed the issue many times to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and claimed that the agency has failed to mention Jewish victims of terrorism in its reports.

‘OCHA continues to present a false image of reality. Time after time they choose to ignore Israeli victims of terrorism and the existence of Palestinian terror,’ Erdan said.

‘It is a disgrace to the UN that Palestinians censor OCHA reports and causes the dismissal of those who 'dare' to condemn Palestinian terrorism. Jewish lives matter and we must fight this discrimination in any way possible. There is no reason to continue to allow the entry of UN officials who lie about what's happening in Israel and support terrorism against it.’