United Nations Human Rights Council delegitimizes Israel

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A question: What do Eritrea, Mauritania, Somalia, Qatar, Pakistan, Libya and Venezuela have in common? An answer: All are lands ruled by chronic violators of basic human rights. And, oh yes, all are members of the U.N. Human Rights Council.

This is no mere coincidence. Members of the UNHRC needn’t worry about being criticized by the UNHRC. Membership has an additional privilege: A license to slander Israel, the only state in the Middle East that actually guarantees rights to its citizens — Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Druze alike. The UNHRC has condemned Israel more than all other nations of the world combined. It has passed not a single resolution condemning China, Russia, Cuba or Zimbabwe.

In 2018 the Trump administration withdrew the U.S. from the UNHRC. Then-Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley called the entity a “protector of human-rights abusers, and a cesspool of political bias.” She added: “America should not provide it with any credibility.”

The UNHRC has not improved since. Last week, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, published a blacklist of 112 companies operating in the West Bank, 94 of them Israeli, six American and 12 from other countries.

“I am outraged,” responded Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. “We call upon all U.N. member states to join us in rejecting this effort, which facilitates the discriminatory boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) campaign and delegitimizes Israel. Attempts to isolate Israel run counter to all of our efforts to build conditions conducive to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that lead to a comprehensive and enduring peace.”

As you may know, what we call the West Bank was for centuries a possession of the Ottoman Empire. In the early 20th century, the British Empire took over. During the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, Jordanians seized the territory, re-named it (they didn’t much care for the old name: Judea and Samaria), expelled the Jews, and desecrated Jewish religious sites. Israelis took the West Bank away from Jordan in the defensive war of 1967.

So when people claim the West Bank is “illegally occupied Palestinian territory,” they are not stating a fact but rather making a claim useful to those waging “lawfare” against Israel.