US Congress members call on UN leadership to remove antisemitic official

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The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-congress-members-call-on-un-leadership-to-remove-antisemitic-official/>

A bipartisan group of US Congress members has urged United Nations leadership to remove a Palestinian rights investigator from her position, due to her antisemitism and anti-Israel bias.

The lawmakers said UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese’s past comments and recent refusal to condemn Palestinian terror attacks ’patently demonstrate her strong bias against Israel.’

‘Her biased behaviors should have no place at the United Nations, and clearly demonstrate the lack of impartiality,’ the 18 House representatives said.

The Times of Israel exposed UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese’s history of antisemitism in [an investigation](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-palestinian-rights-officials-social-media-history-reveals-antisemitic-comments/) last year.

Albanese, who is tasked with investigating Israeli activities in the Palestinian territories, has not faced any repercussions from the UN or issued a clear apology for her past statements. She has continued her lopsided focus on Israel in recent months.

The US House representatives urged UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UN human rights chief Volker Turk to relieve Albanese ‘of all official duties,’ [in a Friday letter](https://schneider.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/schneider.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2022-02-24-final-signed-letter-to-secretary-general-and-high-commissioner-re-sr-albanese.pdf).

The Congress members cited Albanese’s refusals to condemn deadly Palestinian terror attacks against Israelis in the past month, saying she instead only voiced ‘one-sided condemnation of Israel.’

‘For an official tasked with serving as an independent, neutral, and expert voice on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, her inexcusable silence against terrorism targeting Israelis and her outrageous and prejudicial remarks clearly reflect the irredeemable bias of her mandate,’ said the letter led by Democratic Representative Brad Schneider of Illinois and Representative Ann Wagner of Missouri, a Republican.

The letter also called on the UN to end a Commission of Inquiry into Israel. One of the commission’s members, Miloon Kothari, also made [antisemitic statements](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=015742192883069867459:k3m1yn-i4ua&q=https://www.timesofisrael.com/member-of-un-gaza-probe-apologizes-for-jewish-lobby-remark-slammed-as-antisemitic/&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiBqOjZw7b9AhW9F1kFHUa0AJkQFnoECAQQAg&usg=AOvVaw1nTJSgo2xNPo5orvFN_f2L) last year and remains in his position.

The commission is harshly critical of Israel, while almost entirely ignoring Palestinian terror. The UN’s International Court of Justice is [investigating Israel](https://www.timesofisrael.com/uns-international-court-of-justice-announces-early-timeline-for-probe-into-israel/) after the commission recommended it do so last year.

The Congress members said the two cases illustrate the UN’s systemic, disproportionate focus on Israel. No other country is under the same level of investigatory scrutiny, and the General Assembly condemned Israel [more than all other countries](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-condemned-israel-more-than-all-other-countries-combined-in-2022-monitor/) combined last year.

‘Albanese’s more recent comments only reaffirm and strengthen our assessment that the UN system is riven with bias,’ the Congress members wrote.

‘We strongly urge you to call for severing all ties with Ms. Albanese, help disband the Commission of Inquiry into Israel, and recommit to a United Nations system free from antisemitic and anti-Israel bias,’ the letter said. ‘We hope that you will instead work to bring Israelis and Palestinians together to ensure security, peace, and prosperity for all, and request a detailed accounting of what you are doing to tackle the antisemitism and anti-Israel bias endemic in the UN system.’

North Carolina’s Kathy Manning, New York’s Grace Meng, and Christopher Smith of New Jersey, co-chairs of the House Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism, also signed the letter.

Last month, 11 Congress members [called for Albanese’s removal](https://www.timesofisrael.com/congress-members-urge-removal-of-un-official-for-antisemitism-exposed-by-toi/) in a separate letter to UN leadership.

Albanese said during a 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza terror groups that the ‘Jewish lobby’ was in control of the United States.

She has also sympathized with terror organizations, dismissed Israeli security concerns, compared Israelis to Nazis, accused the Jewish state of potential war crimes, said Israel controlled the BBC, and claimed that the Jewish state started wars out of greed.

Albanese attempted to distance herself from the comments in a statement to The Times of Israel, but since the report exposing the comments last month, [has denied](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-palestinian-rights-investigator-denies-jewish-lobby-comments-are-antisemitic/) that the comments are antisemitic and brushed off criticism as ‘yet another politically motivated attack.’

Guterres’s office has previously said that Albanese is an independent investigator appointed by the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and not under the secretary-general’s control. Guterres has often spoken out against antisemitism, but not against anti-Jewish and anti-Israel bias in the UN ranks.

The US and Israeli missions to the UN, the US State Department, Israeli officials and leading US Jewish groups have also condemned Albanese’s antisemitism.

UN special rapporteurs are supposed to be unbiased, but Albanese refers to Israel as a settler-colonial enterprise and to Jews in Israel and the pre-state British mandate as foreign interlopers subjugating an indigenous Palestinian population. She has repeatedly justified violence against Israelis, sympathized with terror groups and dismissed Israel’s right to self-defense.

In her first official report to the UN this year, she urged a rejection of the conflict paradigm, describing Israel solely as an oppressor and legitimizing Palestinian ‘resistance.’

Last month, Albanese also [refused to comment](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/un-rights-officials-mum-on-hamas-use-of-captive-israeli-civilian-for-propaganda/) after the Hamas terror group broadcast a video of captive Israeli civilian Avera Mengistu for propaganda purposes. International law forbids taking civilians captive, and bars using any prisoners for propaganda purposes.

Republican lawmakers [have introduced](https://www.timesofisrael.com/bill-calling-to-end-un-probe-into-israel-reintroduced-to-us-congress/) a bill to Congress calling to end the Commission of Inquiry and cut US funding for the probe.