Israel Should Quit Putting up With UN's 'Triple' Standards - Ex-Israeli Diplomat

March 12, 2020

Sputnik News

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/202003121078544477-israel-should-quit-putting-up-with-uns-triple-standards---ex-israeli-diplomat/>

Sympathy for the Palestinians is far from being the only reason behind the UN's alleged bias against Israel, thinks the country's former ambassador to the organisation. The race for prestigious positions and anti-Semitism are what push many countries to vote against the Jewish state.

It's been a month since the United Nations Human Rights Council released its list of over a hundred businesses with ties to Israeli settlements that operate in the West Bank, a move that pleased Palestinians and various Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions groups around the world.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War. While Palestinians and much of the world view these settlements as illegal, Israel and the US dispute these claims. Commenting on the UN decision, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that "the UN Human Rights Council is a biased body that is devoid of influence. Not for nothing have I already ordered the severing of ties with it".

Tel Aviv's relations with the UN and its various bodies have always been complicated. In 1947, the organisation backed a partition plan for the area of Palestine and welcomed Israel's declaration of independence, which happened a year later. But the situation started to change in the late 1950s and early 1960s primarily because more and more countries in Africa and Asia became independent.

The new states, which had just broken their colonial chains, and who have witnessed Palestinians struggling to do the same couldn't support Israel, considering it an occupying force.

Scared of Pressure

But Ron Prosor, Israel's former ambassador to the UN and now head of the Abba Eban Institute of International Diplomacy at IDC Herzeliya, thinks the UN bias against Israel was not only dictated by support for the Palestinian cause.

"There are countries in Africa, former Soviet territory and Asia that would vote in favour of Israel at the UN on some of the issues but they are afraid of certain blocs that would gang up against them and prevent them from getting any positions at the organisation if they dared to do so", he explained referring to such influential groups as the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Conference or the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) whose representatives are present at the UN.

Established in 1955 and boasting some 125 member states, NAM vowed to be impartial, uniting countries that didn't want to belong to either the American or the Soviet bloc.

In practice, however, says Prosor it ended up being biased against Israel. "It is really a numbers game. This bloc has the numbers so if they decide to go after a country, be sure it is doomed".

Canada was one of these countries that experienced firsthand the rage of this bloc. In 2010, it lost a race for a UN Security Council seat failing to secure two-thirds of votes needed to get the position. Reports suggested that the failure was connected to the positive shift the Canadian government had made towards Israel.

UN's Triple Standards

Anti-Semitism was yet another reason for the UN bias against the Jewish state, says the former diplomat.

"Not all criticism against Israel should be branded as anti-Semitism. But when legitimate criticism of a democratic country is used to shove anti-Semitic content that's demonising and delegitimising Israel and the Jewish people, this is unacceptable".

One example of such behaviour is comments made in 2008 by Iran's then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who used the UN General Assembly's stage to disperse anti-Semitism, accusing "deceitful Zionists" of manipulating Americans and Europeans.

Another example was the comments made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who on the sidelines of the UNGA in 2019 compared Israel's conduct in Gaza to Nazi Germany.

Prosor believes that the UN accepts this behaviour because of its "triple standards". "There is one standard for democracies, one standard for dictatorships, and one special standard for Israel".

In 2018, Israel became the most condemned country at the UN, with the organisation passing at least 20 resolutions against the Jewish state for violating human rights, expanding its settlement activity in the West Bank, and the handling of Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

A year later, the international body adopted 18 resolutions condemning Israel, with only seven directed at the rest of the world.

No More Putting up with Bias:

To tackle this problem, Prosor believes Israel should "go after these countries", "stand up to them", and "raise its voice".

At the beginning of 2019, Israel did just that, leaving the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) after 69 years of membership.

Explaining the decision, Israel's ambassador to the UN Danny Dannon wrote that "UNESCO is the body that continually rewrites history, including by erasing the Jewish connection to Jerusalem... it is corrupted and manipulated by Israel's enemies... we are not going to be a member of an organisation that deliberately acts against us".

"UNESCO used to pass anti-Israel resolutions all the time. Interestingly enough, once we left the organisation, this conduct has stopped. It only shows you that by leaving, Israel delegitimised this organisation sending it a message that its conduct was not acceptable", explained the former diplomat.

At the same time, Prosor knows that the Jewish state would not be able to leave all the international bodies that provide a stage for anti-Israel bias, as it would isolate Tel Aviv on the global arena.

That's why he thinks Israel should persuade like-minded western countries that its path and direction are right. "I am not worried about the 'bad guys'", said Prosor referring to the undemocratic states that make up the majority at the UN.