UN called on to fire envoy for questioning Israel's right to defense

April 12, 2023

The Jerusalem Post

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-739005>

An open letter calling for the [dismissal of Francesca Albanese](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-724416), the UN Special Rapporteur for Palestinian territories, was sent to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Tuerk on Tuesday.

The reason for the demand is recent comments made by Albanese on Twitter, in which she claimed that Israel can't claim its right to defend itself against ‘the people it oppresses/whose lands it colonizes.’

The authors of the letter expressed ‘utter dismay and outrage at the abhorrent statements’ made by Albanese, adding that it is ‘unfathomable that such a statement would ever be made by a UN representative.’

The letter was sent on behalf of the [International Legal Forum](https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/ilf-launches-new-legal-network-resource-center-687597), a global network of lawyers and activists, aiming to combat antisemitism, advance human rights and promote peace in the Middle East, and the Solomon-Observatory on Discrimination, an Italian-based NGO combating antisemitism.

[Albanese's statements](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-724871) were made following terror attacks in which sisters Rina and Maia and their mother Lucy Dee, as well as an Italian citizen were murdered.

The letter goes on to stress that Albanese's recent comments are only the latest examples [of biased statements](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-724023) by the UN envoy.

‘Ms. Albanese has a long history of antisemitism and virulent bias, both before and during her term as SpecialRapporteur, using age-old antisemitic tropes such as accusing ‘the Jewish lobby’ of controlling the United States,repeatedly dismissing Israeli security concerns, such as following this most recent wave of terror, as well ascomparing Israelis to Nazis, expressing support for the BDS Movement and charging the Jewish state with theheinous crimes of apartheid, genocide and war crimes,’ the letter further states.

Therefore, the International Legal Forum ended by calling on the UN to ‘ensure that the UN lives up to its own rules and standards... by dismissing Ms. Albanese and abolishing her position entirely. The UN would be far better served by replacing Ms. Albanese’s mandate with a Special Rapporteur for Combating Antisemitism.’

Past comments by Albanese

Albanese has been repeatedly under fire from Israeli officials and organizations combating antisemitism for her comments in the past.

Albanese's initial appointment in April 2022 was denounced by Israel after then-ambassador to the UN Meirav Eilon Shahar claimed she ‘compared the Holocaust to the Nakba and advocates for the de-facto destruction of the nation-state of the Jewish people.’

In December 2022, outrage over Albanese's comments came to a head when she spoke via Zoom to a Hamas-organized conference in Gaza, during which she stated, ‘you have a right to resist this occupation.’ Also in December, Israel’s mission to the UN in Geneva spoke out after Israeli media reported that Albanese had used the phrase ‘Jewish Lobby.’

The Simon Wiesenthal Center [then sent a letter](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-725032) to the UN Secretary-General, writing that it ‘is an outrage to allow a proven anti-Zionist and antisemite to head the UN Human Rights Council’s already biased investigation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.’