The Biden administration is embracing the 20th anniversary of the antisemitic UN Durban conference (Obama boycotted the 10th)

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By [Elder of Ziyon](https://www.jewishpress.com/author/elderofziyon/)

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In a stunning change of US policy, the Biden administration has issued a statement of support for the notoriously antisemitic Durban Conference of 2001.

The UN World Conference Against Racism held in 2001 was an [antisemitic hatefest](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzl6DbiFI20).

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion were distributed at the conference by the Ahlul Bait Foundation of South Africa. Antisemitic flyers literally supporting Hitler and banners supporting terrorism against Israel were featured.

The conference had two elements, an NGO Forum and a Governmental Conference.

The NGO Forum - with the enthusiastic participation of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch  - was where the BDS strategy started. It attacked every Jewish organization in attendance. Its final declaration called Israel a "racist apartheid state" guilty of "war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing." Statements denouncing attacks on Jews and synagogues were removed from the final declaration.

The Governmental Conference was not as explicit in its antisemitism but it was no better. Its final [declaration](https://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf)singled out Israel, listing only Palestinians specifically under the 45 paragraphs in the section of  "victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

Paragraphs against antisemitism were removed in the final statement.

The United States and Israel walked out of the conference because of its explicit antisemitism.

The UN tried to organize a celebration on the tenth anniversary of the conference, called Durban III, in 2011. The US, along with thirteen other countries, boycotted the conference because it would have restated the antisemitic and bigoted final statement. The Obama White House [issued a strong statement](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/22/statement-press-secretary-10th-anniversary-durban-conference) describing why:

Several months ago, the United States announced that we would not participate in the 10-year commemoration of the 2001 Durban Conference. Consistent with that decision, we are not attending today’s high level event in New York.

Since its inception at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, the Durban process has included ugly displays of intolerance and anti-Semitism. In 2009, after working to try to achieve a positive, constructive outcome in the Durban Review Conference that would get past the deep flaws of the Durban process to date to focus on the critical issues of racism, the United States withdrew from participating because the review conference’s outcome document reaffirmed, in its entirety, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) from 2001, which unfairly and unacceptably singled out Israel. The DDPA also endorsed overbroad restrictions on freedom of expression that run counter to the U.S. commitment to robust free speech.

Last December, the United States voted against the resolution establishing the commemoration because we did not want to see the hateful and anti-Semitic displays of the 2001 Durban Conference commemorated.

Because of this US stance, many other nations boycotted Durban III: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Poland, besides Israel.

Last month, the principled US position against Durban was changed.

The US, which just rejoined the UN Human Rights Council, [led an effort to write a statement](https://geneva.usmission.gov/2021/03/19/joint-statement-on-racism/) against racism that included this paragraph:

Recalling the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, we are committed to working within our nations and with the international community to address and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, while upholding freedom of expression.

This pro-Durban paragraph was completely unnecessary in the context of an anti-racism declaration. But it ensured one result: Israel cannot possibly sign this letter.

Every other nation that boycotted Durban III signed this letter supporting the original Durban Declaration that attacked Israel and only Israel, thanks to US efforts to get signatories.

Israel is isolated - by the US.

This coming September, the UN plans to hold a 20th anniversary meeting for Durban, Durban IV, where the original anti-Israel statement will be reconfirmed. The [General Assembly resolution for the meeting](https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/C.3/75/L.88) says:

 Decide to hold a one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the second day of the general debate of the seventy-sixth session, on the theme “Reparations, racial justice and equality for people of African descent”, consisting of an opening plenary meeting, consecutive round tables and/or thematic panels and a closing plenary meeting (para. 28);

By only mentioning that the meeting will concentrate on discrimination against Black people, the organizers are attempting to get around the objections to Durban III. However, this is a smokescreen, because it also says:

Also decide that the meeting will adopt a short and concise political declaration aimed at mobilizing political will at the national, regional and international levels for the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and its follow-up processes.

Based on the pro-Durban letter by the US at the Human Rights Council, it appears entirely possible that the Biden administration will attend the September farce and put on a fig leaf of "trying to change it from within." However, that cannot work: the conference says its entire purpose is to confirm and implement the original Durban declaration in full.  Objections to one paragraph do not get attached to the declaration, which is approved by consensus.

The only way to deal with Durban IV - the 20th anniversary celebration - is to completely boycott it as was done for Durban III - the 10th anniversary celebration.  Anything less than that it condoning the message of Durban. The US, in its zeal to appear like a leader in the anti-racism movement, appears to be willing to change its principled position that Durban was wholly unacceptable.

No one ever thought that the Biden administration would be worse than the Obama administration concerning Israel.  This is worse.

One other thing: The date of the Durban commemoration at the UN is September 22 - which comes out on the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, which precludes practicing Jews from protesting.