The Trump-Haley Effect at the United Nations

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It has become routine for Palestinians to name public places, including streets, schools, parks and public squares after hard core terrorists convicted of the most heinous offenses. Over the years, Israel has vigorously protested these outrages to the European Union, the United Nations, and the United States. The latter, particularly under the Obama administration, offered faux sympathy and little else, while the UN and EU were routinely dismissive of Israel’s objections. In the eyes of the UN and EU, the Palestinians could do no wrong and the Obama administration, by its deafening silence, gravitated toward this obscene position. This shocking inaction further encouraged the Palestinians to engage in what can only be described as depraved and aberrant behavior.

But on May 28, something strange but surprisingly decent happened at the UN. UN Secretary-General [António Guterres](http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-pulls-support-for-palestinian-womens-center-named-after-terrorist/) issued a stinging rebuke to the Palestinian Authority for naming a women’s center after Dalal Mughrabi, a notorious terrorist. In 1978, Mughrabi along with seven other Arab terrorists commandeered a bus packed with civilians and mercilessly murdered 37 people, including 12 children.

For the Palestinians, this act of debauchery warranted praise and Mughrabi was elevated to the status of heroine and martyr. On May 26, the watchdog group, [Palestinian Media Watch](http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=21152) revealed that a women’s center named after Mughrabi in the Arab town of Burqa was constructed with funds provided by the UN and Norway. A prominent sign posted on the building bore the logos of the Palestinian Authority, the UN and Norway. Worse yet, PMW quoted a village council member who stated that “the center will focus especially on the history of the struggle of Martyr Dalal Mughrabi and on presenting it to the youth groups, and…constitutes the beginning of the launch of enrichment activities regarding the history of the Palestinian struggle.”

Upon learning of the outrage, a spokesperson for Guterres released a statement that termed the naming “offensive” and “unacceptable” and described it as a “glorification of terrorism” and an “obstacle to peace.” Guterres also demanded the immediate removal of the UN’s logo. Just two days prior, Norway issued a similar rebuke to the Palestinian Authority demanding not only the removal of the Norwegian logo but the return of all Norwegian funds earmarked for the project.

A statement released by [Borge Brende](http://www.timesofisrael.com/norway-demands-pa-return-funds-for-womens-center-named-after-terrorist/), Norway’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, was unusually harsh in tone and content. It called the Palestinian “glorification of terrorist attacks…completely unacceptable” and noted that “Norway will not allow itself to be associated with institutions that take the names of terrorists in this way [and] will not accept the use of Norwegian aid funding for such purposes.”

So what led to this sudden, drastic change in attitude? There are likely three causes.

Unlike his predecessor Ban Ki-moon, Guterres has made statements and taken actions demonstrating a more balanced, nuanced approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example in March, he rejected a UN report authored by an Israel-hating conspiracy theorist that peddled the banal and false claim that Israel practices apartheid and had the report [removed](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/17/world/middleeast/un-rima-khalaf-quits-israel-apartheid.html?mcubz=1) from the UN’s website. Shortly thereafter, a top official that headed the commission which issued the report resigned. That same month, he publicly reiterated recognition of ancient historical and religious [Jewish ties](http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-secretary-general-reaffirms-ancient-jewish-ties-to-jerusalem/) to Jerusalem. This was seen as a rebuke to UN bodies like UNESCO, which had sought to sever that nexus. In an address to the World Jewish Congress in April, Guterres [stated](http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/un-secretary-general-guterres-israel-needs-to-be-treated-like-any-other-member-state-4-1-2017) that “Israel needs to be treated like any other UN member state,” and tellingly noted that, “the modern form of anti-Semitism is the denial of the existence of the State of Israel.”

In addition, the relentless surge of radical Islamic terrorism in Europe has likely produced an increased level of empathy with Israel. Moreover, nations affected by terrorism have reached out to Israel and sought its expertise. Only the most radical and anti-Semitic of Europe’s leaders, like Sweden’s Deputy Prime Minister Margot Wallström and British Labor Party head, Jeremy Corbyn, still differentiate between Israeli blood and blood spilled in Western Europe.

But perhaps the single most influential factor for the positive change in attitude lies with President Donald Trump and America’s ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley. From the moment he was elected, Trump made clear that he would no longer tolerate the UN’s inequitable practices and shoddy treatment of Israel. He could not have picked a better emissary than Nikki Haley to carry out America’s new and robust approach toward rectifying a long-standing, systemic UN problem.

At every opportunity and in every forum and venue, Haley has made clear that the United States will not sit idly by while one of its most important allies and only Mideast democracy is mercilessly attacked and vilified by assorted despots and dictators, while other nations with abysmal human rights records are allowed to go unchallenged. Haley has made clear to UN member states that “[there’s a new sheriff in town](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CherkB4XsBk)” and that sheriff is “[taking names](http://freebeacon.com/national-security/nikki-haley-we-are-taking-names-at-u-n/).”

Judging by this past week’s swift action by the UN Secretary General and Norway, it appears that the Trump-Haley, one-two combo is having the desired effect. Haley’s continued pressure at the UN is all but certain to produce more positive outcomes but it is still an [uphill battle](https://www.breakingisraelnews.com/88773/un-organization-hid-positive-report-israel-pressure-assad-regime/#0fePJTej9tD845ah.97) given the level of long-standing and embedded vitriol which still prevails in that cesspool of depravity.