Israeli Officials Urge UN Chief Gutteres to Withdraw New ESCWA Report Accusing IDF of ‘Extrajudicial Executions’ of Palestinians

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Israeli officials reacted furiously on Thursday to a new UN report issued through the office of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that accused Jewish state of committing systemic human rights violations against the Palestinians, including “extrajudicial executions.”

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely called on Guterres to withdraw the report, charging it was “based on lies.”

“It is all calumny and defamation of Israel,” Hotovely declared.

Prepared by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), [the report](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1714807_1.pdf) is scheduled for discussion when the Economic and Social Council meets on July 27.  ESCWA is an important element of the UN’s institutionally-funded support for the Palestinians, which includes official bodies like the Division for Palestinian Rights, and an established agenda item devoted to alleged Israeli abuses at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Based in Lebanon, ESCWA was behind a now infamous report [issued in March](https://www.algemeiner.com/2017/03/15/us-outraged-by-un-report-that-accuses-israel-of-establishing-apartheid-regime-that-dominates-the-palestinian-people/) that accused Israel of establishing an “apartheid regime” over the Palestinians. That report was quickly withdrawn by Guterres and led to the resignation of ESCWA’s under secretary-general, Rima Khalaf, who [blamed Israel](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39310154) for placing “huge pressure on the secretary-general of the UN.”

At the time, Israel praised the speedy reaction of Guterres, and was similarly encouraged by the UN chief’s statement one month later [describing the denial](http://www.jta.org/2017/04/23/news-opinion/world/un-secretary-general-denial-of-israels-right-to-exist-is-modern-form-of-anti-semitism) of Israel’s right to exist as a “modern form of antisemitism.”

Israeli diplomats are now hoping that Guterres will respond to the latest ESCWA report in similar fashion.

“Just as we succeeded in having the previous preposterous report removed, we will fight relentlessly against this blatantly false distortion of the truth as well,” pledged Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon.

Though the word “apartheid” is absent this time, the report condemns Israeli policy — not just towards “the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,” but also “the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan” — in harsh and uncompromising terms.

“Fifty years of occupation of Palestinian and Syrian lands have created severe limitations on social and economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan,” the report claimed in its conclusion. It further accused Israel of carrying out an expulsion policy targeting Palestinian residents of eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank, asserting that these alleged practices “may amount to a forcible transfer of protected persons, which could be a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

The report also insinuated that the IDF was implicated in grave war crimes. “Serious concerns remain about the use of force and unlawful killings by Israeli security forces, including some cases which may have amounted to extrajudicial executions,” the report said, citing “several documented cases” but providing no further details.

Despite the inclusion of the Golan Heights in the focus of the report, no mention was made of the civil war and unprecedented humanitarian crisis in neighboring Syria, where the number of deaths from the conflict is approaching 500,000. However, the report did call upon Israel “to facilitate visits of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan whose family members reside in their mother homeland, the Syrian Arab Republic.”

Hotovely warned that if the UN carried on publishing similar reports, “it cannot be an honest player and will continue to be severely criticized.”

Danon deemed the ESCWA report to be “yet another blood libel against the State of Israel.”