Anti-Israel U.N. Body Assigns ‘Privacy Expert’ to Review U.S. Terror Laws

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## The United Nations’ Human Rights Council – a body U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley has repeatedly criticized for its anti-Israel bias and questionable membership – is sending a controversial “privacy expert” to the U.S. to analyze and critique privacy rights and anti-terror laws under President Trump.

The U.N. announced Thursday that Special Rapporteur Joseph Cannataci will undertake his first official visit to the U.S. from June 19-27.

“I will place particular focus on the efficacy and proportionality of intrusive measures, identify problematic areas and best practices, and make recommendations for the way forward for the current administration,” Cannataci [said in a statement](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21756&LangID=E).

Cannataci will pay “special attention” to surveillance within the U.S., intelligence-sharing agreements and the electronic sharing of health data, according to the statement.

The U.N. also said he will pay attention to the possible renewal of FISA 702, a section of the Foreign Intelligence Sharing Act (FISA) that allows the U.S. to tap the communications of foreigners outside the U.S. The House Intelligence Committee website [describes](https://intelligence.house.gov/fisa-702/) FISA 702 as a “key anti-terror tool that has helped to thwart numerous terror plots including the 2009 conspiracy to bomb the New York City subway.”

The relationship between the Human Rights Council and the Trump administration has been extremely fraught since Trump took office. Administration officials including Haley and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have repeatedly warned that the U.S. may leave the Council if it does not change its anti-Israel bias and reform its membership so as to exclude human rights abusers such as Cuba, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

Haley visited the body’s headquarters in Geneva last week and urged it to reform, days after calling it a “haven for dictators” in an op-ed for the *Washington Post.*

Cannataci was himself the subject of controversy recently when he [criticized](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-politics-conspiracy-idUSKBN18I0CG) a Japanese anti-terror law over privacy concerns. His rebuke triggered a protest from the Japanese government to the U.N., which Cannataci subsequently dismissed as “empty words,” according to Reuters. He also [wagged](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/09/uk-setting-bad-example-on-surveillance-says-un-privacy-chief) his finger last year at the U.K., warning that a new surveillance bill would be “setting a bad example” to the rest of the world.

Cannataci said he hoped his visit to the U.S. would allow him to identify “possible obstacles” to the protection of the right to privacy in the U.S., as well as “the way forward in line with international standards agreed to by the U.S. government.”

“I would like to think that the United States should show leadership when it comes to the protection, promotion, and respect of one of the most crucial universal rights for liberal democracies,” he said in the statement.

Cannataci will hold a press conference in D.C. on June 27 and will present his final report in March 2018.