**UN conference on "inalienable" Palestinian rights opens in Turkey**

To protest the “biased” nature of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinians, Israeli officials will not attend that organization’s two-day international meeting on the peace process, which opens in Turkey on Wednesday.

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“We don’t want to attend those meetings when they are based on an anti-Israeli narrative,” Israel’s deputy permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Daniel Carmon, told The Jerusalem Post.

The resolution that created the committee and its meetings failed to recognize a two-sided conflict, he said. ”So from this perspective, Israeli government officials are not attending those meetings.”

Carmon said the practice was not unique; similar meetings are also avoided by Israeli officials.

“It’s a practice of Israel not to send Israeli government officials to those meetings, under the logic that those meetings are based upon one of so many anti-Israeli resolutions that are adopted with an automatic majority at the General Assembly,” he said.

“What is helpful is direct talk between us and our neighbors, between us and our partners to peace,” he said, “This is not being done in politicized meetings of the Committee of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.”

He took issue with the the theme of the meeting, “Ending the occupation and establishing the Palestinian state.”

Carmon cited this as evidence to the unbalanced tone the conference was likely to project.

“Until the UN General Assembly resolutions become balanced and recognize the fact that the conflict between us and the Palestinians, or the process between us and the Palestinians, is a two-sided process, you probably won’t see Israeli government officials attending those politicized seminars and meetings,” Carmon said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said the invitation to Israel to the conference had been half-hearted.

Although Israel, along with the Palestinians, is at the center of the event, Israel received the same generic invitation that was issued to all 192 UN member states ”We are talking about peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We are not just one invitee among others,” Palmor said.

When talking about an event of this kind, a carbon letter through the mail does not constitute a direct invitation, he said.

For a conference of this type, the UN should have been in direct dialogue with the Israelis to explain the program, solicit their input and explain how they could contribute, Palmor said.

UN political affairs officer Brenden Varma said in response: “We would greatly appreciate a dialogue with Israel. The committee has strongly supported the objective of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. We would welcome any engagement with Israel.”

He noted, however, that “historically the Israeli government has chosen not to work with this committee.”

The meeting’s goal is to provide a forum to exchange ideas on the peace process and building a Palestinian state on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

It will explore past negotiations, the role of third-party mediators and Jerusalem.

In the absence of Israel governmental participation, Varma said that at this event and in the past the committee has solicited the attendance of MKs and members of civil society.

But for the Turkey event, he said, there were three Israeli cancelations among those who had been invited to participate in the conference’s panel of experts.

Among them was MK Shlomo Molla (Kadima), who told the Post he canceled because of the great number of Knesset meetings and votes this week on issues for which he was an advocate.

As a result, out of the 17 experts who are slated to speak, the only Israeli present will be Danny Seidemann from the non-governmental Jerusalem organization Ir Amim. At least two Palestinian representatives are on the panels: Nemer Hammad, a political adviser to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Bassam al-Salhi, the general secretary of the Palestinian People’s Party.

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu of Turkey, the secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is also expected to speak, as is the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Robert Serry, who will deliver a message from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.