Canada's UN ambassador slams 'biased, antisemitic' remarks by human-rights expert

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By The Canada Press

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Canada's ambassador to the United Nations in New York is condemning "blatantly biased, antisemitic comments" by a human-rights investigator at the international organization.

Bob Rae says in a tweet that comments made by Miloon Kothari, who sits on a UN commission of inquiry set up in response to last year's 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, are "a disgrace to institutions supposedly dedicated to the rule of law."

Kothari caught attention for remarks he made during an interview on Monday on the podcast for Mondoweiss, a news and analysis website that says it provides an under-represented perspective on Palestinian rights in its coverage of the region and related U.S. foreign policy.

In the interview, Kothari questioned why Israel is a member of the UN and said he was disheartened by social media he claimed is controlled by "the Jewish lobby" and "specific" non-governmental organizations.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, an advocacy group, urged the Canadian government to condemn what it called the appointment of biased members to the commission of inquiry, saying Kothari flagrantly contravened UN rules on impartiality.

Kothari, who was the UN's first special rapporteur on adequate housing, is one of three members of the commission of inquiry backed by the UN Human Rights Council.

Ambassador Michèle Taylor, who is the U.S. permanent representative to the UN Human Rights Council, also condemned the "outrageous, antisemitic remarks" by Kothari and called on Michelle Bachelet, the UN human rights chief, to denounce them too.

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