# 38 countries boycott antisemitic Durban IV Conference

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World Jewish Congress

<https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/38-countries-boycott-antisemitic-durban-iv-conference>

A total of 38 countries openly boycotted the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism in Durban on Wednesday citing concerns of antisemitism and anti-Israel bias.

The countries boycotting Durban IV were: Albania, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, UK, US and Uruguay. The European Union also did not participate or speak at the commemoration.

WJC President Ronald S. Lauder expressed his appreciation for countries who did not participate in conference, saying “We commend the leadership of the thirty-eight countries who boycotted the Durban Conference and refused to participate in this virulently antisemitic event.

In the words of the late Elie Wiesel ‘We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.’

We will continue to support and stand together with the leaders of all countries who fight against racism and antisemitism.”

Attending the conference, Belgium, China, Egypt, Iran, Ireland, Holy See, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Russia, and Syria. The Belgian representative clarified that his government considers antisemitism to be unacceptable, that is why there was no high-level Belgian participation in the event.

Unsurprisingly, Iran, Syria and the Palestinian Authority used the Durban platform as an opportunity to vilify Israel, alleging that Israel is a racist, colonial and apartheid state.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry thanked the countries for their support, noting that “The original Durban Conference, an UN-hosted event, became the worst international manifestation of antisemitism since WWII.”

While the 2001 conference aimed to become “a landmark in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism,” it degenerated into a hallmark of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, marking a lost opportunity to create a strong international mechanism against racism and all forms of hatred. Accredited groups at the conference distributed copies of the antisemitic *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and cartoons of hook-nosed Jews. Thousands protested against Israel, with signs equating the Star of David to a swastika, praising Hitler and calling it an apartheid state.

More than twice as many countries boycotted the conference compared to 2011, when fourteen countries boycotted the conference. Only Israel and the United States boycotted the original 2001 Durban Conference.