



המשלחת הקבועה של ישראל לאומות המאוחדות
PERMANENT MISSION OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by:

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Agenda Item 69:
Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination

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Check Against Delivery

On behalf of the State of Israel, I wish to reiterate my country's commitment to building a global society free of prejudice and discrimination against any individual or group based on ethnicity, religion, race, or any other personal characteristic.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel's dedication to fighting racism, prejudice, and intolerance is rooted deeply in its religion and culture. The Bible states, "You shall not abuse the stranger for you were strangers in Egypt" (Ex. 22:20). This concern for the "other" is grounded in Jewish Scripture and is the touchstone of Israel's democracy. Israel's Declaration of Independence, which was signed as we struggled for our very existence, states the following:

The State of Israel will...ensure complete equality of social and political rights for all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture...

Moreover, this issue is emphasized in Israel's educational establishment, where primary and high school curricula emphasize the values of tolerance, pluralism, and the acceptance of others. Israel additionally provides annual training courses dedicated to building democratic, tolerant societies, which are attended by participants from around the world.

Furthermore, research and training institutes in Israel address the issue of racism and intolerance. Just this month, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Remembrance Authority, partnered with the NGO Nyamirambo, the French Memorial of the Shoah, and Israeli universities to present a seminar for Tutsi survivors of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. For a nation still in the midst of memorializing and rebuilding their society, the Tutsi NGO Nyamirambo chose to visit Yad Vashem in order to learn from Israel's efforts to memorialize the past and use it as a reference point in their endeavors.

Mr. Chairman,

It is deeply troubling that 60 years after the end of the Holocaust, Antisemitism has increased throughout the world in recent years, in some areas with widespread acceptance. This vicious phenomenon has reemerged in the form of violent attacks, arson of synagogues, vandalism, desecration of cemeteries, and rhetoric disguised as anti-Zionism. The Jewish People have not been the target of such extreme intolerance since the end of World War II. For a list of Antisemitic incidents, I suggest visiting the website, www.antisemitism.org.

It is particularly unfortunate that Antisemitism has spread like a plague throughout the Muslim world. After centuries of respectful cohabitation between Muslims and Jews in Islamic countries, radical elements in the Islamic world more frequently preach hatred against Jews and Israel. On October 28th, for example, Iran's television station *Sahar* aired a film justifying Holocaust deniers and attempted to draw empathy to their struggle. On September 30th, Hizballah's *Al-Manar* television station aired an interview inciting Judaism as a "criminal and dangerous mafia," and professed that Islam's war is "with the Jews." *Al-Manar* also broadcast the highly Antisemitic program, "The Diaspora," based on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Such virulent Antisemitism serves to inflame an already frustrated and alienated youth who vent their anger violently on Jews, and it has become all too commonplace in media establishments throughout the Muslim world.

Mr. Chairman,

In light of the rise of global Antisemitism, Israel applauds the United Nations for its recent efforts to combat this dangerous phenomenon. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The UN has taken upon itself the important task of commemorating the memory of the Holocaust and teaching the moral lessons of this awful chapter in human history to

the world. In June 2004, a United Nations seminar on Antisemitism was held, where Secretary General Koffi Annan stated the following:

...Throughout history (Antisemitism) has been a unique manifestation of hatred, intolerance and persecution...the rise of Antisemitism anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. Thus, in fighting Antisemitism we fight for the future of all humanity...our organization came into being when the world had just learnt the full horror of the concentration and extermination camps. It is therefore rightly said that the UN emerged from the ashes of the Holocaust. And a human rights agenda that fails to address Antisemitism denies its own history.

The annual resolution passed in the last General Assembly against religious intolerance included a condemnation of Antisemitism. In January of this year, the General Assembly held a special session to mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps and installed an exhibit on Auschwitz in the lobby of the UN headquarters. In March, Secretary General Annan attended the opening of the new wing of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, where he stated, "A United Nations that fails to be at the forefront of the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism denies its history and undermines its future."

In this context, I would like to acknowledge the historic resolution, approved unanimously last week by the General Assembly, which sets January 27 as the "International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust." The historical resolution also "urges member states to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to prevent future acts of genocide" and "Requests the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach on the subject of the 'Holocaust and the UN' as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education..."

I wish to commend the Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, the Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, and the Secretariat for their efforts to encourage Member States to collaborate on this

important task and help ensure future generations will live in a free world, guided by the principles of freedom, tolerance, and respect.

Mr. Chairman,

In his statement yesterday before this committee, the Special Rapporteur addressed the threat that racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia pose to humankind. We must all strive for a world in which such manifestations of hatred no longer exist.

In the words of the biblical prophet Malachi:

הלא אב אחד לכולנו, הלווא אל אחד בראנו

Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?

Thank you Mr. Chairman.