COI on Israel and Jewish Lobby comment is antisemitic, UNGA nations say

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<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-720828>

United Nations member states took an unusually strong stand against the [Commission of Inquiry](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-720130) (COI) on Israel, condemning both its bias and the past “Jewish lobby” statement made by one of its members when the issue was debated Thursday.

“We cannot ignore the fact that a current member of the commission made antisemitic comments in late August, referring disparagingly to the ‘Jewish lobby,’” United States envoy to the UN Lisa Carty told the General Assembly’s Third Committee.

She referenced a comment made by COI member Miloon Kothari charging that social media was controlled by the “Jewish lobby.” He later apologized for that comment and a second one he made, which appeared to question whether Israel should be a UN member state.

“We categorically reject this statement, which we deem to be outrageous, inappropriate and corrosive,” Caty said. “We regret that senior UN leadership has still not publicly repudiated these repugnant statements or asked this commission member to step down.”

Caty asked COI chair, South African legal expert Navi Pillay, to report on steps she has taken to ensure that the commission “remain fully objective and impartial.”

Pillay has yet to condemn Kothari’s comments.

At least 10 countries including Israel referenced that comment when taking the floor to condemn the commission’s bias against Israel, while another seven of the 33 speakers also rejected the COI and the report it delivered.

It is unusual for so many countries at the [UNGA](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-719512) to speak out so forcibly in support of the Jewish state. The UNGA chair intervened at times, asking that the speakers not speak critically of a COI investigator but that request was ignored.

Who spoke on Israel's behalf?

Countries that spoke on Israel’s behalf, aside from the US were the Netherlands, Guatemala, Hungary, Germany, Australia, Austria, the [United Kingdom](https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-720547), the Marshall Islands, Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Canada, Liberia, Palau and Italy. The European Union also issued a statement against the COI. The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva created the three-person commission in 2021 in the aftermath of the 11-day Gaza war, known in Israel as Operation Guardian of the Walls.

The COI is unique in that it is an open-ended investigation with no end date and with a mandate to investigate any Israeli human rights violations both within the country’s sovereign borders and in territories that it controls over the pre-1967 lines.

In its report to the UNGA, Pillay asked that the 193-member body seek an International Court of Justice advisory opinion regarding the illegality of “Israel’s occupation” of Palestinian territory, noting she believed it was a “permanent occupation.”

But the debate focused more on the nature of the COI, with some countries, including Israel, charging that the report itself was antisemitic.

“We are not antisemitic!” Pillay emphasized. “I am 81 years old and this is the first time I have been accused of antisemitism.... In my own country that will not be received well.”

Pillay claimed that the commission’s open-ended mandate is not an expression of bias but a response to an open-ended occupation that “has no end in sight.” The commission’s wide mandate will allow it to explore many issues relating to the conflict over time, she added.

“Do be patient, we are going to be here for a long time,” Pillay said.