A New Low Point In UN History

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(Die Presse, Vienna – October 4, 2024)

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The past year has shown the UN’s failure to deal with Israel and Hamas’ terrorist attacks.

The first anniversary of the Octo­ber 7 mas­sacre by the ter­ror­ist organ­iz­a­tion Hamas, the worst attack on Jews since the Holo­caust, under­scores the cata­strophic fail­ure of the United Nations Sec­ret­ary Gen­eral António Guterres and the High Com­mis­sioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, in their main task – the fair and impar­tial pro­mo­tion of peace, secur­ity and human rights.

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The dis­pro­por­tion­ate con­cen­tra­tion of the UN on con­demning the Israeli defense meas­ures in Gaza and Lebanon raises ser­i­ous doubts about their neut­ral­ity and cap­ab­il­ity. The rela­tiv­iz­a­tion and con­tex­tu­al­iz­a­tion, as if the cruel slaughter of civil­ians could be excused, the asser­tion of the moral equi­val­ence of ter­ror­ists and a self–defend­ing demo­cracy, the silence of UN Women on the fate of Israeli women and the clear dis­reg­ard for Israeli host­ages – over 100 are still being held by Hamas in ter­rible con­di­tions, many of them bru­tally murdered – are deeply dis­turb­ing. Israel is striv­ing for peace, but will respond res­ol­utely to any aggres­sion, while main­tain­ing its inter­na­tional respons­ib­il­ity and moral com­pass.

Remark­ably silent

The select­ive applic­a­tion of stand­ards by Guterres and Türk has brought the UN to a new low. It is a reminder of the bad times in UN his­tory, when the Gen­eral Assembly equated Zion­ism with racism.

Volker Türk, who is remark­ably silent when Israel is attacked, has pre­vi­ously advoc­ated such puni­tive meas­ures against Israel. His rhet­oric, which at times reflects the most egre­gious slanders against Israel, is in total con­trast to the impar­ti­al­ity one would expect from a high-rank­ing UN offi­cial.

Sur­pris­ingly, Türk’s silence was deaf­en­ing when Francesca Albanese, a UN offi­cial who is part of Türk’s human rights appar­atus, accused Israel of mak­ing rad­ical, unfoun­ded accus­a­tions and called for Israel’s expul­sion from the United Nations. The Sec­ret­ary-Gen­eral’s extremely inad­equate response: the inde­pend­ence of the UN rap­por­teurs.

This passiv­ity is in stark con­trast to former UN Sec­ret­ary-Gen­eral Kofi Annan, who called for the dis­band­ing of the dis­cred­ited Human Rights Com­mis­sion because he recog­nized that its lack of cred­ib­il­ity under­mined the UN’s mis­sion.

The UN lead­er­ship not only fails to counter unfoun­ded accus­a­tions, but has often become a mouth­piece for the Palestinian nar­rat­ive, turn­ing a blind eye to the destabil­iz­ing influ­ence of Iran. If Guterres and Türk are really inter­ested in a solu­tion, instead of slander­ing Israel, the UN has the neces­sary tool – Res­ol­u­tion 1701, which calls for Hezbol­lah’s with­drawal from south­ern Lebanon.

It is not too late for Guterres and Türk to change their ways and listen to Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch’s Jew­ish New Year’s ser­mon, which he delivered a few days ago about the lack of inter­na­tional lead­er­ship after Octo­ber 7: “What does it take for those who con­sider them­selves to be role mod­els of social justice to stand up for the Jews? And if not for Jews, then at least for the cent­ral val­ues of the West­ern Enlight­en­ment?