**Every Senator Agrees the U.N. Must Change**

May 2, 2017

By: Senators Chris Coons and Marco Rubio

Wall Street Journal

https://www.wsj.com/articles/every-senator-agrees-the-u-n-must-change-1493678610

It’s rare, especially these days, for all 100 U.S. Senators—from Bernie Sanders to Ted Cruz, from Elizabeth Warren to Mitch McConnell —to agree on something. But the scourge of anti-Israel bias at the United Nations is such an issue. Last week, every senator signed our letter to Secretary-General António Guterres, urging him to improve the U.N.’s treatment of Israel and eliminate anti-Semitism in all its forms.

While the U.N. has achieved some important successes since its founding 70 years ago, too many of its member states and agencies use the world body as a vehicle for targeting Israel rather than as a forum committed to advancing peace and human rights. This encourages and supports the broader scourge of anti-Semitism, and distracts key U.N. entities from their original missions.

As both the U.N.’s principal founding member and its largest financial contributor, the U.S. must insist on real reforms. We in Congress have a responsibility to conduct rigorous oversight of U.S. engagement at the U.N. and its use of our citizens’ tax dollars. We commend Ambassador Nikki Haley for stating that “the U.N.’s anti-Israel bias . . . is long overdue for change.” In another hopeful sign, Mr. Guterres recently disavowed an anti-Israel report by the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and demanded that it be withdrawn.

Still, the U.N. continues to fund and maintain many standing committees that serve no purpose other than to attack Israel and inspire the anti-Israel boycott, sanctions and divestment movement. These committees must be eliminated or reformed.

While the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization does important work on Holocaust education and preserving world heritage sites, some member states persist in pushing measures to target Israel and deny Jewish and Christian ties to Jerusalem. Unesco member states must understand that these actions only undermine the credibility of their organization.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has faced troubling allegations of inciting violence against Israelis and aiding Hamas. If it does not cease these activities, it risks losing support of U.S. lawmakers.

Perhaps most troubling is the Human Rights Council. Charged with drawing the world’s attention to gross human-rights violations, its members include some of the world’s worst human-rights violators, who devote far too much time to baseless attacks against the Jewish state. The HRC even maintains a permanent item on its agenda targeting Israel—Agenda Item 7. No actual human-rights violator is targeted in this way.

Speaking recently before the HRC in Geneva, Erin Barclay, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, criticized the council’s anti-Israel focus as “unfair and unbalanced,” noting that its “obsession with Israel . . . is the largest threat to the council’s credibility” and “limits the good we can accomplish by making a mockery of this council.”

The HRC should be the premier international body addressing the many pressing human-rights challenges of our time in countries such as China, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, Russia, South Sudan and Venezuela. We therefore urge specific reforms to end the HRC’s imbalanced focus on Israel, including the elimination of Agenda Item 7 and a competitive admission process in order to broaden and better balance membership on the council.

In his April 25, 1945, address to the United Nations, President Harry S. Truman challenged the authors of the U.N. Charter to create an organization rooted in lofty humanitarian principles, dedicated to the benefit of all mankind, and capable of achieving “a just and lasting peace.”

For too long the world body has fallen far short of those ideals. In order for it to be more effective in advancing peace and human rights around the world, America must remain vigilant. We stand ready to lead sustained bipartisan efforts in Congress and with our international partners to eliminate the U.N.’s anti-Israel bias, and to fight anti-Semitism in all its forms.