# Pro-Israel groups say they won’t let UN ‘kangaroo court’ go unchallenged

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A collection of pro-Israel organizations has decided that an unprecedented attack on Israel requires a response.

Israel faces a first-time-ever open-ended U.N. Commission of Inquiry created by the U.N. Human Rights Council, which includes notorious human-rights violators such as Cuba, China, Libya, Somalia and Venezuela. The U.N. General Assembly voted late last year to give the commission a budget of $4.5 million a year, allowing it to hire some 18 full-time staff members, almost the same number as the human-rights office branch of the United Nations covering all of Asia and 60% of the world’s population.

Israel is refusing to engage with the commission. But an alliance of pro-Israel nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) says it can play a role, and to that end is submitting troves of documentation to the commission.

“The U.N. Human Rights Council has arranged a kangaroo court where the fix is in, and it makes it impossible for a state like Israel to participate because to do so would undermine its clear sovereign rights and responsibilities,” Professor Anne Bayefsky, head of Human Rights Voices and the Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, told JNS.

“NGOs don’t have the same duties and responsibilities as states. Our rationale is to ensure that inquiry members can’t pretend they didn’t know and they didn’t have the data, and that it is Israel’s fault for not participating. We’re undermining their attempt to weave not only a false narrative but a story based on an alleged inability to garner alternative information,” she said.

Bottom of Form

The original basis of the inquiry was the Israel-Hamas flare-up of violence last May, in which Israel defended itself from an onslaught of more than 4,000 rockets launched from Hamas in the Gaza Strip over an 11-day period. The inquiry, however, calls for submissions of evidence of any crimes ever allegedly committed at any point in the past—back to the “root causes” of the conflict or even in the future—as the inquiry’s mandate knows no end, provisions unique to this particular commission.

Its mandate also includes making recommendations for criminal responsibility. The commission is designed and staffed to encourage anti-Israel and anti-Jewish NGOs to submit claims and help build a case to delegitimize the very founding of modern-day Israel; label it an apartheid state; call for an economic boycott and arms embargo; and to seek prosecution of Israeli officials at the International Criminal Court.

The outcome of the so-called inquiry is predetermined. The three-person commission is led by South Africa’s Navi Pillay, who served as the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and has displayed a consistent, well-documented animus towards Israel. Among her litany of accusations of illegal Israeli conduct, she condemned Israel during the *Mavi Marmara*Gaza flotilla raid of 2010 for alleged actions that were later refuted by a U.N. commission headed by Sir Geoffrey Palmer.

Another member appointed to the new commission, Miloon Kothari, was a U.N. expert who took the extraordinary step of lying on a visa application in order to enter Israel and produce a hostile report based on one-sided information.

The commission is expected to issue its initial report in June, followed by a second report to the U.N. General Assembly in the fall and further reports every year thereafter. U.N. resolutions pursuing inquiry recommendations to prosecute Israelis and Israel’s supporters before the International Criminal Court and to institute anti-Israel boycotts based on accusations of racism are the hoped-for next steps.

 **‘Ideology being passed down is seen in every walk of life’**

Bayefsky is leading an effort to counter the established narrative of the commission, with her allied NGOs digging into their extensive databases, meticulous research, and original documents about anti-Semitism and anti-Israel terrorism, making 2 million unique submissions including individual names of victims on the Israel side. The participating organizations include Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC), the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE) and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA).

“The commission stands with eyes closed and we are telling them—forcing them: Look, read. They wouldn’t open their eyes, but we have to do it. We can’t just say they won’t publish it. We have to force them to see it. What can they answer? What can they say?” Yigal Carmon, founder and president of MEMRI, told JNS. The thousands of submissions from MEMRI include original video evidence of anti-Semitism and ethnic-cleansing goals within the Arab and Muslim world, and among Israel’s enemies—from Hamas and Islamic Jihad to Fatah and the Palestinian Authority.

“This is our duty,” stressed Carmon. “There is an impact to accumulated information.”

The commission requested the names of specific victims and survivors of the conflict with no time limit backwards or forwards. Human Rights Voices, Touro and its partners submitted hundreds of thousands of names of Holocaust victims and Jews who fled persecution from Arab lands, according to Bayefsky.

Their submissions itemized more than a million victims of the Jew-hatred advocated by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini, a documented Nazi collaborator and promoter of genocide against all Jews who is revered and emulated by Palestinian leaders today. Also submitted were the individual names of hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who fled persecution, ethnic cleansing, or were expelled from Middle East and North African Arab countries in the years following the establishment of the State of Israel. The submissions were accompanied by a synopsis of the tribulations of the Jews in Middle East and North African countries over the ages, their indigenous roots in the land of Israel and the journey of these refugees back to the land of Israel, their ancestral homeland.

Palestinian Media Watch submissions include photos, videos, original documents and detailed analyses of decades of Palestinian hate speech and incitement to violence, in addition to irrefutable proof of Palestinian Arab efforts to erase Jewish history, promote genocide and terminate the Jewish state. The thousands of submissions from ITIC include data on the terrorist identities and connections of individuals who the Palestinians and the United Nations have claimed are innocent civilians and victims of Israeli crimes. The photographic and video evidence includes terror manuals, terror tunnels and documentation of terror financing and marketing.

AICE, which operates the Jewish Virtual Library, utilized its links to research the Arab wars against Israel; Palestinian terror attacks and their victims; and historical anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism for thousands of submissions. CAMERA addressed the root causes of the conflict, such as anti-Israel activism, blood libels and Palestinian-led efforts to delegitimize Israel by falsifying history and events on the ground.

Human Rights Voices and the Touro Institute facilitated submissions from individuals by creating a [submission template](http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/pillays-pogrom/submissions/) and disseminating information about U.N. online services for taking submissions. Among those who made a submission was [Stuart Force](https://hrvoices.org/assets/attachments/documents/Stuart_Force.pdf), the father of Taylor Force, an American visitor to Israel murdered by a Palestinian terrorist, incentivized by the pay-for-slay system employed and backed by the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Mahmoud Abbas.

“According to the Palestinian Authority’s own 2021 expenditure report, it spends 33% more on salaries to terrorists and their families than on health care, and 10 times more rewarding terrorists than on education. The ideology being passed down is seen in every walk of life. The way to glory is to go kill people, not to excel in your studies. Schools, [public] squares and soccer tournaments are named after terrorists, including after a 13-year-old who went on a stabbing spree with his cousin. What is the message there to a school-age child?” Lt. Col. Maurice Hirsch (res.), director of legal strategies at Palestinian Media Watch told JNS, noting that Abbas has publicly vowed that if the P.A. had just a penny left in its coffers, it would use it to pay the salaries of convicted terrorists.

“It would be very naive of us to think the commission will actually investigate any of this. The idea is to present the other side of the story—and then we will watch the commission simply ignore everything we have to say. We made 11,000 submissions and yet the commission chose to meet not with us but with anti-Israel groups.

“Tell me how many submissions did they make? Why hasn’t the commission made that effort to reach out to us? This illustrates the farce of the commission, which has no intention of coming to an honest document. Any of us could write the report right now—Israel and all Israelis are responsible; Israel is a colonial project; let’s reinstate the U.N. resolution that Zionism is racism, etc. That will be the bottom line of the commission reports,” said Hirsch, who nevertheless committed to submit more material to demonstrate the bias and inaccuracies, as the commission carries on in perpetuity.

 **‘This is a textbook case of U.N. treatment of Israel’**

An early indicator of the commission’s approach is its lack of acknowledgment of the simple receipt of pro-Israel submissions. Bayefsky, Carmon and Hirsch say they have received absolutely no response to any of their submissions or follow-ups.

“The insidious quality of this whole inquiry runs so deep that the system for taking submissions provides no response, not even a bare acknowledgment of receipt. None of us got a response. More than 2 million unique submissions and names of Jewish victims and zero acknowledgments. By comparison, inquiry members, including Pillay and her U.N. staff, visited Jordan, conducted interviews and took information from anti-Israel NGOs and alleged victims of Israeli crimes,” said Bayefsky.

She noted that she and her partner organizations logged the entry of each submission to be able to provide later proof.

“This is a textbook case of U.N. treatment of Israel; not only is the written mandate one-sided, but the process is very much skewed against the Jewish state,” she said.

She noted that she and her aligned NGOs took care to stress that their submissions did not constitute endorsement of the commission itself.

For Israel’s part, it said that NGOs are free to engage on behalf of the state in the process, but it doesn’t expect pro-Israel evidence to have any substantive effect on the commission’s work.

Still, Carmon is among those that believe the immense effort is worth it. “Sometimes, things do happen. Sometimes, circumstances initiate it. Then, our material is right there to furnish new decisions and approaches,” he concluded.

Hirsch concurred, adding “when you can show that the commission is biased to begin with, I think that might make some inroads into defunding the commission, which is a major goal. Once the commission loses funding, they can write whatever they want. No one will hear it.”

Ultimately, Bayefsky says the commission is not an end in itself, but simply a means for those seeking Israel’s destruction to further their plan. Hence, the attack of the commission, and of the Human Rights Council standing behind it, must be met head-on.

“For far too long, anti-Israel forces have believed they have total control over the narrative. They control the U.N.’s HRC; they have an automatic majority at the U.N. General Assembly, and they think they can control the input and output of the myriad numbers of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish U.N. products. This is a direct challenge to their control. The next step is for democratic countries that claim to care about modern anti-Semitism to speak up and withdraw support and funding.”

As of now, American taxpayers are paying 22% of the cost of this HRC’s budget, despite the fact that [68 senators](https://www.portman.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/portman-and-cardin-lead-68-senators-letter-secretary-blinken-prioritize) have strongly urged the administration to prioritize ending the inquiry. [Other members of the U.S. Senate](https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/lankford-colleagues-call-on-department-of-state-to-end-involvement-with-the-united-nations-human-rights-council-for-probe-of-israel) have urged the administration to go further and to leave the Human Rights Council on the grounds that legitimizing the council, given its efforts to delegitimize Israel, betrays an American ally.