Wiesenthal Centre Open Letter to the Head of EU Delegation at the UN in Geneva

July 28, 2022

The Simon Wiesenthal Center

<https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/news/wiesenthal-centre-open-letter-14.html>

TO:

Ambassador Lotte Knudsen

Delegation of the European Union to the UN

and other international organisations in Geneva

Dear Ambassador Knudsen,

We write on behalf of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, one of the largest international Jewish human rights organizations with over 400,000 member families in the United States, Europe and Latin America. We are an accredited NGO at the United Nations, UNESCO, the OSCE, the OAS, and the Council of Europe.

We express grave concern regarding the heinous, unacceptable statements by UN Human Rights Council Commissioner Miloon Kothari. Not only has he now falsely accused Israel of "apartheid" <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/07/apartheid-is-not-sufficient-an-interview-with-un-human-rights-commissioner-miloon-kothari/> but even more egregious is Mr. Kothari's questioning the legitimacy of Israel to exist as a member of the United Nations.

Kothari stated, "I would go as far as to raise the question of why [Israel is] even a member of the United Nations. Because ... the Israeli government does not respect its own obligations as a UN member state. They, in fact, consistently, either directly or through the United States, try to undermine UN mechanisms."

Kothari has given full-throated support to the biased, untruthful Human Rights Council's "Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel", also known as the Pillay Commission.

We take note that this extremist, in diplomatic clothing, intends to meet in the coming days with United States Members of Congress in Washington.The Wiesenthal Centre is in contact with Congressmen to ban Kothari and his COI colleagues from Capitol Hill, a measure we hope to be emanated by the European Union.

This unprecedented UNHRC commission -open ended- and unprecedented in scope, funded by millions of dollars and 18 staff members with the sole objective to investigate, demonize and prosecute the State of Israel in perpetuity - a threat no other nation on earth is facing.

For his part, Kothari has already falsely labeled Israel an apartheid state and promises that the Pillay Commission "will get to the apartheid question, at some point in the future"; gathering "forensic data for submission to the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice,"... "and then, at a particular time, hand it over to the judicial bodies that can take action."

Kothari is engaging in overt antisemitism, claiming the "Jewish lobby" controls social media. The Jerusalem Post reported this quote: "We are very disheartened by the social media that is controlled largely by - whether it is the Jewish lobby or specific NGOs," stated 'human rights expert' Miloon Kothari." See: https://[www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-713126](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-713126)

In October 2021, the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, sent a protest to the then-President of the Human Rights Council, in which she complained that the appointment of Navi Pillay, Christopher Sidoti and Miloon Kothari, the three members of the COI, had violated the rules and guidance of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions.

By these rules and guidance, "members of such commissions and missions should, in all cases, have a proven record of independence and impartiality." "There can simply be no doubt," the letter continued, "that these members are tainted by bias, let alone the perception of bias, and cannot conceivably be regarded as independent and impartial."

The Israeli letter added: "Mr. Kothari is also the subject of a formal complaint to the OHCHR given his violation of UN regulations and ethical standards when carrying out an 'unauthorized official visit to Israel' as Special Rapporteur for Housing, which he had presented as a private academic visit.

Madam Ambassador, this COI is a poison pill against peace and European goals, that will embolden violence, terrorism, and antisemitism. We urge you to publicly denounce Kothari's libelous statements, false accusations, and anti-Jewish remarks against an ally, Israel, and the Jewish people.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre urges the European Union to voice full support for the elimination of the anti-Israel Commission of inquiry.

The UN Human Rights Council's ill-conceived COI and its continuous anti-Israel resolutions call for firm action. The defunding of the COI and the UNHRC targeting the Jewish state, instead of confronting outrages generated by China, Russia or Iran, the worst human rights violators, who should be made accountable to the Council. If that cannot be met, the world of democracies should leave the UNHRC.

Madam Ambassador, we would welcome an opportunity to  discuss these issues with you.

Most respectfully,

Dr. Shimon Samuels

Director for International Relations

Simon Wiesenthal Centre