Presidential Candidates Should Pledge to End the UN’s Onslaught Against Israel

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At the end of 2016, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is expected to end his 10-year period as UN secretary general.  
  
The America-Israel Friendship League welcomes the initiative of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to oppose and protest the “escalating discriminatory practices against Israel at the United Nations.” The latest example of prejudice at the UN is revealed in the June visit to Israel by the soon-to-retire UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, during which he chose to generate a few headlines by calling on Israel to “end the collective punishment blockade of Gaza.” In his words, Ban has claimed that “the closure of Gaza suffocates its people, stifles its economy and impedes reconstruction effort. It is a collective punishment for which there must be accountability.”

Secretary Ban is misguided. He knows that the blockade is strategic and vital to the safety of Israel and its people, and does not impede humanitarian aid to Gaza via Israeli ports. In 2011, a report commissioned by the UN itself upheld the legality of the blockade. But Ban simply ignores it. The secretary general unfortunately reflects an ongoing bias of elements of the UN against Israel.

Here are some of the most recent examples: • UN General Assembly: Between 2012 and 2015, a total of 83 resolutions against Israel were adopted, compared to 15 for the other 192 member states of the UN.  
  
• UN Security Council: During the first four months of 2016, the UNSC has expressed concern about terrorism in 12 countries; Israel was not one of them.  
  
• The UN Human Rights Council: In the 11 years since the establishment of the council, Israel has been the subject of 73 resolutions and Special Sessions. The other 192 countries in the world have been the subject of only 271 resolutions and Special Sessions.  
  
• The World Health Organization: A one-sided resolution was adopted by the organization in May 2016, accusing Israel of actions which prevent proper medical care for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. The resolution was based on reports submitted by the UN Secretariat and UNRWA and disregarded the wellknown facts regarding Israel’s delivery of high-quality life-saving medical treatment to all in need, while failing to address the lack of access to medical supplies and treatment for the victims of full-scale humanitarian disasters in Syria and other conflict zones.

• The Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): On April 2016, UNESCO adopted a one-sided and misleading resolution advocating that two ancient Jewish heritage locations are an integral part of “Palestine,” and called on Israel to end its “illegal” archeological excavations.  
  
• The Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW): In March 2016, Israel was the only country singled out by name for criticism at the UNCSW annual meeting.  
  
• The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA): An official ESCWA report of 2014 wrongly charged Israel with pursuing a policy of state-sponsored “ethnic and religious purity” based on its desire to be recognized as a Jewish state; the report also endorsed an international boycott of Israeli products produced in the West Bank.  
  
• UN Leadership: UN policy against Israel is being led by the highest officials of the UN, including the Secretary General Ban himself, who said, in connection with Palestinian terrorism, that it is “human nature to react to occupation which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism,” and that “Palestinian frustration is growing under the weight of half a century of occupation and the paralysis of the peace process.”  
  
The America Israel Friendship League (AIFL), a non-profit, non-political organization of which I am chairman, has long been concerned with the growing anti-Israel activity at the United Nations.  
  
Statements from the secretary general, in addition to resolutions and reports issued through the UN’s various institutes and branches (as presented above), as well as in many official statements issued on behalf of several of its member states, show blind disregard.  
  
The AIFL expresses concern that the UN’s disproportionate condemnation and outright discrimination against Israel often reflects latent anti-Semitism.  
  
The United States’ friendship with Israel transcends political differences, and with the upcoming presidential elections, the AIFL will call upon the presidential candidates of both parties to publicly pledge that under their presidency: • The United States will seek to ensure that the UN will cease and desist discriminatory actions against the only democracy in the Middle East and the only Jewish state in the world.  
  
• The United States will decisively stand by the State of Israel in its continuous fight against those who seek to destroy the Jewish state at the UN and at its various institutions.