White-Collar Law Firms Sponsor Award for Anti-Israel UN Official

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By Adam Kredo

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<https://freebeacon.com/national-security/white-collar-law-firms-sponsor-award-for-anti-israel-un-official/>

Several white-collar law firms are sponsoring an event next month that will award the United Nations official responsible for pursuing war crimes charges against Israel.

Navi Pillay, the chairwoman of the U.N. body investigating alleged Israeli human rights crimes, is slated to receive the American Branch of the International Law Association's 2023 Outstanding Achievement Award, according to promotional materials for the event.

The event is sponsored by several law firms, including Gibson Dunn, Debevoise & Plimpton, and White & Case. These firms' financial support for the event is already generating pushback from pro-Israel advocates who are pressuring them to pull their endorsements.

A similar controversy [erupted around last year's](https://freebeacon.com/latest-news/white-case-law-firm-distances-itself-from-second-anti-israel-event-in-a-week/) association conference, when White & Case and others backed a panel discussion titled ‘Racism and the Crime of Apartheid in International Law.’ That event featured speaker Omar Shakir, a longtime Israel critic who claims the world's only Jewish nation is trying to ‘maintain the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians.’

This year's award for Pillay, who will also deliver a keynote address, is driving even fiercer opposition among Israel's defenders in light of the U.N. official's efforts to use the United Nations as a vehicle to erode the Jewish state's legitimacy.

‘It is deeply surprising that not only major law firms like White & Case and Debevoise & Plimpton are headline sponsors of the [association's] conference where a recognized anti-Semite, Navi Pillay, is being honored,’ said Robert Garson, the president of the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists. ‘That Gibson Dunn and Cardozo Law School are lesser sponsors indicates that [the association] has duped them into lending their name to this conference, by failing to disclose the honorees, in advance.’

‘All sponsors,’ Garson added, ‘should reconsider having their names allied to Ms. Pillay, who has been roundly criticized even by U.N. delegates for her unhealthy focus on Israel.’

White & Case's sponsorship is likely to attract particular scrutiny given the firm's past role in [defending](https://freebeacon.com/national-security/financial-giant-morningstar-relies-on-research-from-anti-israel-orgs/) financial giant Morningstar against accusations it is enabling Israel boycotts. White & Case was forced to distance itself from last year's anti-Israel panel and also came under fire for sponsoring a campus event that [questioned](https://freebeacon.com/campus/white-case-backpedals-in-face-of-blowback-over-sponsorship-of-anti-israel-event/) Israel's status as a Jewish state and maligned the country as an ‘apartheid’ nation.

None of the law firms involved responded to *Washington Free Beacon* requests for comment.

Pillay has long been a divisive figure at the United Nations, courting controversy last year when she defended a colleague who [claimed](https://freebeacon.com/latest-news/un-leader-backs-official-who-said-jewish-lobby-controls-social-media/) social media platforms are controlled by the ‘Jewish lobby.’

Her work on the U.N. Commission of Inquiry into Israel has also repeatedly courted controversy for [taking](https://jcpa.org/article/pillays-un-propaganda-crusade-continues-the-latest-un-human-rights-councils-commission-of-inquiry-report/) ’the stream of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish invective from the United Nations to new heights.’

The commission supports economic boycotts of Israel, a central source of legitimacy for the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, and has attempted to prosecute Jewish soldiers at the International Criminal Court for their efforts to defend Israel against Palestinian terrorism.

These efforts have been [condemned](https://www.state.gov/un-human-rights-council-statement/) by the Biden administration and attracted numerous [accusations](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2022-08-12/ty-article/.premium/u-s-lawmakers-call-for-un-commission-of-inquiry-on-israel-to-be-disbanded/00000182-9268-d68b-a3e2-f3699a100000) of anti-Semitism from lawmakers in Congress.

Navi Pillay has spent decades misrepresenting and abusing international law when it comes to Israel, thus promoting hatred of the Jewish state and threatening the self-determination of the Jewish people,’ said Anne Bayefsky, president of Human Rights Voices and director of the Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust. ‘To sponsor a legal 'outstanding achievement award' for such an individual is an outrage that will legitimize her reprehensible behavior and the anti-Semitic bias of her 'inquiry.'‘

‘Lawyers should have learned from history that they have a moral and legal responsibility to confront and reject the use and abuse of law to promote anti-Semitism,’ Bayefsky said.