



TO:

Christian Stocker

Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Austria

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Los Angeles, September 22 2026

Dear Federal Chancellor Stocker,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding Austria's reported intention to participate in the United Nations meeting marking the 25th anniversary of the Durban Conference on September 28.

I was present at the original World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001, serving as a spokesman for Jewish groups. I witnessed firsthand how a gathering convened under the noble banner of combating racism was overwhelmed by virulent anti-Israel hostility and manifestations of antisemitism. Durban was not merely an unfortunate episode 25 years ago. It became a watershed moment in the international demonization of Israel and helped bring rhetoric once confined to political extremes into mainstream international discourse.

The consequences of that legacy remain with us today. Across Europe, the Middle East and the Americas, attacks on Israel's very legitimacy frequently intersect with old and new forms of antisemitism. Particularly since October 7, Jewish communities have experienced how quickly extreme anti-Israel rhetoric can spill over into intimidation and hatred directed at Jews.

Austria has previously declined to participate in Durban anniversary events because of this deeply troubling legacy. Participation in the 25th-anniversary commemoration would therefore mark a significant departure from that principled approach and would lend legitimacy to a process that many Jews remember as a profound betrayal of the fight against racism.

Austria has repeatedly emphasized its historic responsibility and its commitment to combating antisemitism. I respectfully urge your government to remain true to that commitment and to Austria's previous position by instructing its representative to the United Nations not to participate in the September 28 commemoration.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Abraham Cooper

Associate Dean & Direct of Global Social Action

Simon Wiesenthal Center

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