



Mission permanente d'Israël  
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies  
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל  
ליד משרד האנמות המאוחדות  
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Itzhak Levanon  
Permanent Representative

7<sup>th</sup> Regular Session  
Human Rights Council

On the Occasion of the  
Selection and Appointment of Mandate Holders

26 March 2008

Mr. President,

As the Representative of a country which frequently finds itself in the spotlight, I am a dedicated observer of the Human Rights Council. Even so, the Council's capacity for self-sabotage never fails to surprise me. As the list of candidates for Special Procedure mandate holders is put forward today, I cannot help but be overwhelmed at **the profound sense of lost opportunity** with which I am imbued.

Leave aside for the moment, Mr. President, the fact that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories is **hopelessly unbalanced**. Ignore that after 15 years of existence its terms have never been reviewed. Forget that in addition to this mandate, there are at least three other United Nations mechanisms all dedicated specifically to the Palestinian issue. This mandate is redundant at best and malicious at worst. However, Mr. President, my sense of lost opportunity is based upon the inability of the Council to make a change. To be faithful to its own principles of impartiality and objectivity. To resist the urge to flinch in the face of pressure when it comes to its own *renomé* (*public image*).

Mr. President,

I find it nearly impossible to believe that out of a list of 184 potential candidates, the eminently wise members of the Consultative Group honestly—and in good faith—have made the best possible choice for this post. In a recent article, the

proposed candidate stated that he did not think it to be (quote) “*an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with the criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity.*” (end quote) He has taken part in a U.N. fact-finding mission which determined that suicide bombings were a valid method of “struggle.” He has disturbingly charged Israel with “genocidal tendencies,” and accused it of trying to achieve security through “state terrorism.” Someone who has publicly and repeatedly stated such views cannot possibly be considered independent, impartial or objective, as is explicitly required in the Institution Building Text. It does not appear difficult, even at this early stage, to predict what his first report will say.

Mr. President,

Let us be frank with ourselves. This nomination has been imposed on the Council, through intimidation by known parties. A victory for these obstructionists in the short term will transform into a defeat for the Council in the long run. The Human Rights Council is rapidly moving away from its *raison d'être*. We are missing a great opportunity to show the world that this Council genuinely seeks improvement, the chance to make a difference, and the prospect of laying the groundwork for better cooperation with Israel. This troubling nomination is a silent cry in the desert of the Council, saying, *unchain me from the old Commission!* Sadly, that cry goes unheeded.