

The Dangers of Durban II

The United Nations has held three UN World Conferences Against Racism (WCAR) so far. The last, held in Durban, South Africa in September 2001, was hijacked by anti-Israel and anti-Semitic elements. What was supposed to be a conference that would serve to combat all forms of racism and discrimination was instead perverted into a forum to attack Israel. The WCAR became a platform for unjust and libelous accusations that uniquely singled out Israel for blame, particularly by those countries guilty of the worst human rights abuses in the world. The NGO Forum became an uncontrollable venue for those who seek to delegitimize Israel's very existence. It called for a specific action plan to carry out just that.

Sadly, much of what was called for by anti-Israel forces at Durban I is manifested today. Israel is a target for hate on many fronts. Media outlets world wide vilify Israel through unrelenting misrepresentations. Calls are made regularly to renew the Arab economic boycott of Israel, even after many attempts at peacemaking. Religious and academic groups call for divestment from Israel, for the boycott of Israeli academic institutions and for barring Israelis from participating in international conferences and symposia. High-profile Israeli leaders have to exercise caution when traveling to certain countries, to avoid risking arrest for so-called war crimes.

The Durban Review Conference (Durban II), intended to review the progress made in implementing Durban I, is scheduled for the week beginning April 19, 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. To our dismay, any hopes that this time the UN will truly address the real problems of racism and discrimination around the world are fragile indeed. The same efforts to delegitimize Israel are being made by the same groups - Arab and Muslim countries, and NGO's, who are actively seeking Israel's delegitimization in the international community. These efforts entail controlling the formulation of the documents being prepared for Durban II, the final one of which will be voted on at the DRC. They are working hard to insert words into the UN documents that would indict and criminalize Israel, under UN auspices and with UN approval.

This language consists of words now too familiar to everyone -they are repeated over and over in the media, in textbooks, in academic papers and in the documents of international conferences. Words that accuse Israel of "genocide", of "apartheid", "ethnic cleansing", and of "crimes against humanity". This is the language coined at the indictments of the Nazis during the Nuremberg trials and is now obscenely used to indict Israel. If Israel is guilty of crimes against humanity, of occupation and of apartheid, Israel is an illegitimate country. It can then be attacked by terrorists, threatened with boycott, and its leaders can be threatened with arrest wherever they travel.

In this issue

The Dangers of Durban II	1
Action Recommendations	2
Quick Facts	3
Resources and Websites	3
Informative Articles	4

If the UN can put Israel in the dock for these crimes, it is clear how this places Israel in danger. The slogan in 2001 was Israel is the South Africa of the 21st century, and as the regime in South Africa was dismantled, so must Israel be dismantled. This endangers the Jewish people as well, for if Israel is indicted with crimes against humanity, people who support Israel are also attacked, and countries who support Israel become targets for terrorists. This is not the fight against racism - it is its justification.

In the planning meetings for Durban II, the lethal language has again worked its way into the draft documents, using the same false accusations. Israel is called a racist, apartheid regime. Arab countries have tried to insert language that would protect their extremist ideology. The so-called Palestinian "right of return" has been included. An attempt to minimize the importance of the Holocaust has again been made.

Both Canada and Israel have so far announced that they not will participate in the DRC and will not be party to an event that will condemn Israel. Several European countries are considering a similar measure, if certain "red lines" are crossed and are included in the final document. These are listed below. It is important that countries and NGO's understand clearly what is going on and unequivocally state that they will not be party to a UN conference that instead of fighting racism, exacerbates it.

Betty Ehrenberg
Editor

Action Recommendations

1. Contact your heads of states and foreign ministries to make clear your concerns. Meet with local representatives of foreign governments in your communities, urging them to ensure a UN conference that will not cross the **red lines**, and that if it does, they will not participate in the conference. The **red lines** are:
 - a. The singling out of Israel for blame.
 - b. The inclusion of the "defamation of religion" clause that would protect Islamist extremist ideology from criticism.
 - c. Listing a hierarchy of racisms, with Islamophobia as the most disturbing form. All racisms are to be fought equally.
 - d. Removing the mention of the importance of Holocaust commemoration and removing the condemnation of anti-Semitism from the past document.
2. Contact like-minded NGO's, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who will work together with you in coalition and who would also not participate in the DRC if the red lines are violated.



3. Contact your members of Congress or Parliament. Urge them to make a statement that governments should not become party to the plan to demonize and delegitimize Israel. ([view a sample letter](#))
4. Make your voices heard on blogs, Facebook, and other relevant websites.
5. Media monitoring - Respond to news stories that demonize Israel with the correct facts in letters to the editor.

Quick Facts

1. While Israel is condemned, not one of the other 191 UN member states is mentioned in the draft DRC document.
2. There is an attempt to call Israel's security fence a "segregation wall" in the draft.
3. The "defamation of religion" clause would not only protect Islamist extremist ideology, it would impose a severe limit on free speech, which is unacceptable to democracies.
4. These attempts to delegitimize Israel by categorizing her as racist and apartheid are part of a dangerous campaign to re-institute the invidious "Zionism is racism" resolution. This is intended to compare Israel to South Africa, thereby justifying the effort to dismantle Israel just as the regime in South Africa was dismantled.

Resources and Websites

1. The UN website for Durban Review Conference information.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29599&Cr=discrimination&Cr1>
2. WJDC division of the WJC networking site featuring updated Durban II information.
www.drc2009.org
3. Eye on the UN - informative UN monitor. www.eyeontheun.org
4. UN Watch - informative UN monitor. www.unwatch.org
5. I Care - an international internet site against racism. www.icare.to
6. NGO Monitor - an organization that carefully watches the activities and stances taken by NGO's with regard to Israel. www.ngomonitor.org



Informative Articles

Canada and Israel Will Not Join Durban II. What Is Everyone Else Waiting For? - The DRC will go beyond the original Durban gathering's "action plan" and will focus on demonizing Israel, targeting counter-terrorism measures as worse than terrorism itself, attacking freedom of expression, and crystallizing "defamation of religion" - which in reality means defamation of Islam.

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2009/02/05/bernie-m-farber-and-eric-vernon-boycott-durban-ii.aspx>

The UN's Insanity Continues - Negotiators on the final document have claimed that Israel is guilty of apartheid and that a homeland for the Jews is racism.

http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/01/30/2009-01-30_the_uns_insanity_continues.html?print=1&page=all

Ignoring Durban Summit Not an Option - Delegitimizing Israel's existence and holding it to impossible double standards is the 21st century's version of ancient anti-Semitism.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/959357.html>

Congress Joins Fight on Durban II - The US Congress adopted a resolution in September 2008 urging the government to defeat the campaign by some members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to divert the attention of the DRC by singling out and attacking Israel.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1222017454666&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

TV Crew Expelled From UN Meeting on Freedom of Expression - Ironically, the crew was working on a documentary on how the issue of human rights is debated at the UN.

<http://www.ejpress.org/printversion.aspx?idd=34109>

Participation in Durban II? - New US Administration Yet To Announce Plans

<http://www.cnsnews.com/public/content/article.aspx?RsrcID=42707>



Sample letter to parliamentarians on Durban II - 02/09

Dear (Congressman, Member of Parliament) _____,

I write to express my deep concerns regarding the preparations for the upcoming Durban Review Conference (DRC, becoming known as "Durban II"), scheduled for this April in Geneva. This Conference, intended to review progress made by states in combating racism, is being turned into a repeat of the UN World Conference on Racism that took place in Durban in 2001. You remember that Durban became a forum to attack Israel and single it out as the only UN member state for criticism and blame and to invoke the insidious "Zionism is racism" resolution (UN General Assembly Resolution 3379). The NGO Forum sought to castigate Israel through false accusations and delegitimize its existence.

Once again, the same forces that sought to pervert Durban are seeking to again derail a UN conference that should truly address the problem of racism. Documents being prepared for the DRC once again contain unacceptable language that attempts to isolate and criminalize Israel, including the words "apartheid", "genocide", and "crimes against humanity." And yet again, a group of NGO's who want to see a repeat of the disaster at Durban are asking the UN to provide a venue and resources for such a forum.

I fully support the struggle against racism and discrimination and UN efforts to engage in this battle. But UN conferences intended to fight racism must not be allowed to turn into conferences that promote it instead.

Please use your good offices and powers to ensure that the DRC scheduled for Geneva this April does not become a repeat of Durban of 2001. Please help to ensure that the United Nations will effectively address racism and discrimination and not be derailed by those who would abuse it. If those who would undermine the UN's true mission succeed in their endeavors, please make sure that our country does not become party to this debacle and urge our government to not participate in a conference that will promote racism instead of fighting it. Your strong statement can truly make a difference.

Sincerely,