Pro-Israel lawyers urge European countries to drop 'antisemitic' UN conference

August 26, 2021

By Haley Cohen

The Jerusalem Post

<https://www.jpost.com/international/pro-israel-lawyers-urge-european-countries-to-drop-antisemitic-un-conference-677741>

The International Legal Forum (ILF), an Israel-based network of over 3,000 lawyers and global activists, penned a letter to European countries calling on them to withdraw from an upcoming event marking the 20th anniversary of the Durban Conference, to be held at the [United Nations](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/un-human-rights-boss-says-she-has-credible-reports-of-taliban-executions-677625) in New York next month.

The letter, addressed to UN ambassadors and foreign ministers, explains that the original intention of the "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance," first held in South Africa in 2001, was to present a united global front against racism.

"The conference descended into an infamous hotbed of unbridled Jew-hatred, antisemitism and vilification of the State of Israel," the ILF wrote. "It revived the ‘Zionism is Racism’ slur, outrageously claimed Israel is an ‘apartheid state’, distorted the Holocaust and made numerous Nazi analogies. It also became the birthplace and catalyst of the modern Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) Movement, which seeks the destruction of the State of Israel as its ultimate goal."

Countries receiving the letter include Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Each of those countries also adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. The ILF argues that the Durban conference's process and practices are in contradiction to this definition. Consequently, the states are morally obligated to withdraw from the event.

Three countries (Italy, Bulgaria and Poland) pulled out of the UN's 10th anniversary of Durban in 2011, but are thus far remaining for the upcoming one.

In July, [Germany announced it will not attend the UN event](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/germany-will-boycott-the-durban-iv-conference-674831).

The Durban IV Conference is slated to take place on September 22 in Manhattan.