



UNITED NATIONS INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON
THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND ISRAEL

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Your Excellency,

I wish to clarify certain comments I made in a media interview published on 25 July 2022. First, I wish to sincerely express my regret and unequivocally apologize for using the words “the Jewish lobby”. The offence I have caused by using these words has deeply distressed me.

I pride myself on my work as a human rights activist and defender. My entire career has been dedicated towards fighting discrimination, inequality, and injustice and I stand by these ideals. I, therefore, take with the utmost seriousness concerns that my words were perceived and experienced to be antisemitic.

My intention was to denounce the relentless and vitriolic personal attacks against the members of the Commission on social media and some publications, launched to delegitimize and undermine its work. It was completely wrong for me to describe the social media as ‘being controlled largely by the Jewish lobby’. This choice of words was incorrect, inappropriate, and insensitive.

I also wish to clarify that my comment on Israel’s membership of the United Nations was made to highlight the fact that every member of this body should uphold, and respect findings and recommendations issued by it, in accordance with relevant UN General Assembly resolutions. What I wanted to highlight is the non-compliance of Israel with UN decisions related to its obligations under international law, a concern the Commission extensively covered in its first report to the Human Rights Council.

At no place in the interview did I question the existence of the State of Israel. On the contrary, in several instances, during the media interview in question, I have defended the existence of the State of Israel. This is fully consistent with the position of the Commission, as also stated in our first report and stressed in the letter of our Chair to the President of the Council: *“The Commission does not question the status or United Nations membership of either of the concerned states of its mandate. The foundations for the legality of the State of Israel, alongside that of the State of Palestine were laid out by General Assembly resolution 181 and are not and never will be in question by this Commission.”* I did not intend to suggest that Israel should be excluded from the United Nations. I realize that this choice of words has also caused offence and sincerely regret it.

Once again, I apologise for the offence and discomfort caused by my mistaken and insensitive choice of words. I have always condemned discrimination in all its forms, including through antisemitism, and I do so again now. I warmly welcome and fully support the UN’s commitment to combatting antisemitism and its efforts in this regard anchored in human rights.

I am sure you will agree Mr. President, that the Commission must be enabled and protected to implement its mission and mandate, in accordance with the decisions by the UN Human Rights Council.

I avail myself, of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

04 August 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miloon Kothari', written in a cursive style.

Miloon Kothari
Commissioner