UN Censors Israeli Exhibition Featuring Zionism and Jerusalem

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An exhibition initiated by Israel’s permanent mission to the United Nations with the organization StandWithUs and expected to open at the UN headquarters on Monday, was partially censored by the international body this weekend.

Three out of 13 displays put together for the exhibition were disqualified by the UN, including one about Jerusalem, another about Israeli Arabs and a third about Zionism.

The Jerusalem poster presents the city as the spiritual and physical capital of the Jewish people. It shows pictures of holy sites and states that “the Jewish people are indigenous to Israel and have maintained a continuous presence in the land since 1000 BC. Jerusalem has been the center and focus of Jewish life and religion for more than three millennia and is holy to Christians and Muslims as well.”

The display on Israeli Arabs explains that they are “the largest minority in Israel, making up 20 percent of Israel’s population” and describes them as “equal citizens under the law in Israel.”

Finally, the third display defines Zionism as “the liberation movement of the Jewish people, who sought to overcome 1,900 years of oppression and regain self-determination in their indigenous homeland.”

Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon demanded on Sunday that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reverse the decision to disqualify these posters and said that “by disqualifying an exhibition about Zionism the UN is undermining the very existence of the State of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.”

The Israeli mission pointed out that UN General Assembly reversed in 1991 a resolution equating Zionism with racism, which had passed 16 years earlier, and said that with the decision to censor the displays “the UN is de facto enacting this old resolution, defining Zionism and Jerusalem as ‘unacceptable,’ and disqualifying key elements of the heritage of the Jewish people.”

“The UN must reverses this outrageous decision and apologize to the Jewish people,” Danon added. “Zionism and Jerusalem are the foundation stones and the moral basis upon which the State of Israel was founded.

“We will not allow the UN to censor the fact that Jerusalem is Israel’s eternal capital,” he continued.

The organization Stand- WithUs, which provided the displays, said “anti-Israel resolutions in the main bodies of the UN have become a sad, albeit common, phenomenon.”

“The UN has once again exposed its deep bias against the State of Israel,” Shahar Azani, executive director of StandWithUs, said. “This display is meant to educate and share Israel’s inspirational story with the world.”

Azani pointed out that the same displays have been shown numerous times in the United States and abroad, in synagogues and churches, and at campuses and community events.

“It is a shame that the values of the UN, an institution meant to promote values of dialogue and tolerance, have been distorted, deeming the organization today unrecognizable to its original intents,” he said.

The permanent mission of Israel to the UN announced it will put together a protest exhibition in response, including the banned elements, on Monday.