Israel furious as UN set to host '50 years of Israeli occupation' event

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<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4978928,00.html>

Israel is gearing up to push back against a conference being hosted next week by the UN in the organization's New York headquarters to mark what it describes as the "anniversary of the Israeli occupation."

According to a report by the Ministry for Strategic Affairs, headed by Minister Gilad Erdan, several BDS and anti-Israel organizations will be taking part in the conference, which in the past has undertaken efforts to implement a series of hostile measures against Israeli officials.

These include, inter alia, issuing arrest warrants and prosecuting IDF officers and other officials for war crimes, openly calling for the boycotting of Israeli goods, promoting draft dodging in Israel and calling for Israelis to be tried in the International Criminal Court in The Hague for war crimes.

The conference—titled "UN Forum to mark the 50th anniversary of the Israeli occupation"—is being organized by the UN Committee on Palestinian Rights, and will be held at the UN headquarters in New York from June 29-30.

Minister Erdan appealed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to prevent the conference from being held and to avoid UN funding for BDS events and UN entities whose sole purpose is to blacklist Israel.

"As Israel’s Minister of Strategic Affairs, responsible for leading Israel’s response to the international delegitimization and boycott (BDS) campaign against Israel, I write to you to protest in the strongest possible terms the use of UN funds and facilities to support an event aimed directly at promoting the delegitimization and boycott of Israel," Erdan wrote to Guterres.

"Many of the organizations that will be given a platform by the UN at this event, including the American Friends Service Committee, Jewish Voice for Peace, Al-Haq, Al Mezan, Zochrot and others, are leaders of the anti-Israel BDS and legal warfare campaign," he continued. "These organizations dedicate the majority of their energies to promoting economic, academic and cultural boycotts of Israel, attacking Israel in international legal and diplomatic forums, and delegitimizing Israel's basic right to exist.

"Several have connections to designated terror groups while others publically glorify convicted terrorists."

Erdan also sought to rally behind his cause the staunchly pro-Israel Republican senator Marco Rubio, whom he met earlier this month, discussing his fight against the efforts to delegitimize Israel and voicing his concern.

"I urge you to continue speaking out against the UN's use of member states' funds to promote the BDS campaign," Erdan wrote after thanking Rubio for his "important initiatives for countering BDS," as well as his "recent engagements with the UN Secretary-General" in his efforts to correct the "long-standing anti-Israel bias at the UN."

In April, all 100 US senators signed [a letter](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4955120,00.html) sent to Guterres urging him to act against discrimination against Israel in the United Nations.