Israeli Officials Urge UN to Condemn Iran Holocaust Cartoon Contest

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Iran plans to hold another cartoon contest focusing on Holocaust denial, and Israeli officials have called on the United Nations to condemn the event.

Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein on Wednesday appealed to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to denounce the 11th Tehran International Cartoon Biennial.

In a letter to Ban, Edelstein said that “words cannot describe the revulsion and protestation of the state of Israel and many across the world at the recurring proof that Iran continues in its policy of Holocaust denial.”

The winner of the event sponsored by the Tehran municipality will receive a $50,000 cash prize.

Organizers say the competition is designed to highlight the world’s double standard in defending caricatures of the Muslim prophet Mohammed, whose depiction is forbidden in Islam.

The competition scheduled for June 2016 is expected to draw submissions from artists from some 50 countries, Iran’s semi-official IRNA news agency reported in December.

Last week, Israel’s UN ambassador Danny Danon also called on Ban to condemn the competition, claiming “this anti-Semitic act represents the pure evil of the Iranian regime.”

“Denying the Holocaust is one of the most powerful expressions of anti-Semitism, which legitimizes the deaths of millions of Jews,” Danon wrote to the secretary general, noting the upcoming International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.

“While the world will remember the atrocities of the Holocaust which are still fresh in our collective memory, one member state will be hosting a contest which desecrates the memory of the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust,” he wrote.

“The United Nations must resolutely stand up against this hatred and harshly condemn this heinous act.”

The competition is the third iteration of an earlier Holocaust cartoon contest from 2006 launched after Danish newspaper Jyllands-Postens published cartoons depicting Mohammed

In last year’s competition, partially a response to the controversial depictions of the Prophet Muhammad in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, 839 works were submitted for consideration.

The winning drawing of 2015 was of an Israeli crane erecting a wall around the Dome of the Rock. The Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp is featured on the wall in the cartoon, by Abdellah Derkaoui of Morocco.

The 2015 contest was condemned by the US State Department, officials in Israel and the Anti-Defamation League.

Iran has held a number of events questioning the Holocaust in the past, including a conference intended to prove the Shoah as exaggerated.