Haley condemns UN official who urged economic sanctions against Israel

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US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley excoriated a UN official on Friday who urged economic sanctions against Israel and who released a report calling on increased international pressure to end Israel’s “illegal occupation” of the Palestinian territories.

Canadian law professor Michael Lynk, who is the UN Human Rights Council’s special rapporteur on the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, cited in a press briefing on Thursday South Africa’s occupation of Namibia as a precedent for calling for the international community to step up pressure on Israel, including through boycott tactics. Those remarks coincided with a report he released the same day making the same argument.

“The United States is deeply disturbed by recent comments from UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk calling for academic and economic boycotts against Israel, and by his report to the ‎UN General Assembly,” Haley said in a statement released Friday afternoon. “Unsurprisingly, the mandate for this report comes from the Human Rights Council’s Agenda Item 7, the only Human Rights Council agenda item that targets a single country: Israel.”

Israel’s ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, [also criticized Lynk](https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-rights-official-slammed-for-urging-economic-sanctions-on-israel/), who he said was exploiting his position to spread hateful ideas and energize activists of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction’s (BDS) campaign against Israel.

During his Thursday press briefing, Lynk said:  “Israel is very dependent upon trade with the outside world,” in response to a question on whether sanctions could have an affect on Israel.

“If there was an understanding that all of a sudden Israelis wanting to travel abroad needed to have visas, if all of a sudden there was an understanding that Israel wasn’t going to get preferential trading agreements with the EU [European Union], if all of a sudden, the many and multitude forms of military or economic cooperation or academic cooperation with Israel were now going to come to an end … I think you’d begin to see a sea change in the attitude of ordinary Israelis and in the attitude of the Israeli government.”

Haley responded by saying that not only those comments, but the report itself, were evidence of Israel’s mistreatment by the world body.

“Mr. Lynk’s remarks, and the very existence of this report, underscore the Human Rights Council’s chronic anti-Israel bias,” she said. “The United States will continue to oppose attempts to undermine the UN system through actions that unfairly target Israel.”

Last week, the Trump administration announced it intended to withdraw from UNESCO, the UN’s cultural agency, for what it called its “anti-Israel bias.”

After that decision  was announced, Haley warned the entire UN that [other agencies](https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-unesco-bombshell-us-envoy-haley-warns-un-of-more-trouble-ahead/) risked the same treatment if they did not reform.