The UN Continues its Anti-Israel Offensive

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By Joseph Klein

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The United Nations is at it again, finding any means within its power to hurt Israel. The UN is planning to allow many millions of dollars of UN funding, meant to assist the Palestinian Authority in development work, to be used instead to help the Palestinians pursue legal action against Israel in international forums. A document entitled the “[United Nations Development Framework State of Palestine 2018-2022](https://www.unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/UNDP-papp-research-undaf_2018-2022.pdf)” states that such assistance is to include training and technical advice to enable the Palestinians to “effectively access international accountability mechanisms” and “hold Israel accountable for its violations under international law.” The UN document was signed by more than a dozen UN agencies, including UNESCO, UNICEF, the UN human rights office and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). It committed the UN itself to “strengthen its own advocacy on the impact of Israeli violations on Palestine’s development prospects, including through joint activities that clearly communicate the effect that the occupation and breaches of international law have on the ability of Palestine to develop economically, socially, environmentally and politically.”

This so-called “development framework” is a sham. It represents an outrageous abuse of the UN development assistance budget, estimated to be approximately $250 million annually. The Trump administration cannot allow this misuse of U.S. taxpayer funded contributions to the UN to go unchallenged.  [Texas Senator Ted Cruz](http://www.weeklystandard.com/u.n.-support-for-palestinian-lawfare-against-israel-sparks-anger-on-capitol-hill/article/2010272) has already pounced on what he called “yet another example of the UN’s shameful hostility towards Israel, which encourages more false attacks, accusations, and criticism of our close ally.” He added, “I will continue to press all legislative options to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are not used to implement, facilitate, or carry out this discriminatory plan undermining Israel.”

[Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch](https://www.unwatch.org/u-n-gives-1-3-billion-palestinian-legal-recourse-israel-development-programming/), a Geneva-based monitoring group that helped expose the UN’s plan to fund a lawfare campaign against Israel, said, “There is no other example or precedent of the UN funding, training, and advising one side of a conflict to pursue legal advocacy against another side within UN bodies and other international mechanisms.”

The UN Development Framework document’s key premise is that Israel alone bears the “ultimate accountability for Palestine’s ability or failure to reach the global goals articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”  In the UN’s alternate reality, Palestinian leaders bear no responsibility for their  government’s enormous waste, corruption or regular violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people, much less the financial rewarding and incitement of acts of Palestinian terrorism against Israeli civilians. Instead, the UN document reinforces the Palestinians’ victimhood narrative. It places the UN squarely on the side of supporting the fiction that there is some sort of unique “Palestinian character and identity of East Jerusalem,” without acknowledging the reality of the central importance of Jerusalem’s Old City in Jewish history, religion and culture.

The UN is also seeking to squeeze Israel economically. According to a report in Haaretz, UN human rights chief Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein sent letters to about 150 Israeli and overseas companies operating in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, threatening that they may be added to a UN compiled blacklist of companies that, in his words, “operate in opposition to international law and in opposition of UN resolutions.” About 30 of the companies are reportedly from the United States. Last June, U.S. ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley condemned the proposed blacklist as “the latest in this long line of shameful actions” of the UN Human Rights Council.

The UN’s blacklist will serve to bolster the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, whose co-founder Omar Barghouti said, “We hope the UN Human Rights Council will stand firm and publish its full list of companies illegally operating in or with Israeli settlements on stolen Palestinian land, and will develop this list as called for by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2016.” Barghouti wants nothing less than the destruction of the Jewish state. “Most definitely we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. No Palestinian, rational Palestinian, not a sell-out Palestinian, will ever accept a Jewish state in Palestine,” Barghouti said in 2013.

The United Nations is complicit in the Palestinians’ campaign to demonize, delegitimize and discriminate against Israel. The UN continues to demonstrate its anti-Israel bias with its allocation of development money to support Palestinian legal actions against Israel and its threats to blacklist companies doing even a shred of  business in Israeli settlements or East Jerusalem even if those companies employ Palestinians.

"I am here to emphasize that the United States is determined to stand up to the UN's anti-Israel bias,” Ambassador Nikki Haley told reporters last February. It is time for the Trump administration to use the financial leverage of the United States as the UN’s largest funder to put a stop to UN practices that operationalize such bias once and for all.