UN, Scrap Your Hollow Holocaust Commemoration

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Soon after their parents were brutally slain by the Nazis, my mother and her two sisters were herded into a packed freight train. As it hauled its human cargo toward the Treblinka death camp, each of the young women pushed through a tiny opening and jumped out as shots were fired at them from above.

My mother, the siblings’ sole survivor of that perilous escape, ultimately was transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. She described “a living hell” there, punctuated by starvation, merciless beatings, and routine prisoner inspections to designate for the gas chambers and crematoria those weakened by the utterly unspeakable abuse.

The United Nations recently observed International Holocaust Remembrance Day to mark the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau on Jan. 27, 1945. The UN resolution establishing this commemoration in 2005 to honor Holocaust victims also condemns “all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, whenever they occur.”

But with its obsessive hostility toward Israel, the UN repeatedly has sidestepped those stated principles, culminating weeks ago in a resolution that singles out the Jewish state while ignoring repeated incitement against it. In this context, any UN-held Holocaust commemoration is nothing more than hollow pageantry.

It is disrespectful to the memory of my mother, who died young from medical complications tied to the atrocities at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is offensive as well to the memories of my many relatives who were among 6 million Jews systematically exterminated as the world stood silent – precious souls like my mother’s sisters Tziril and Malka, whose upcoming yahrzeits I observe this weekend, and my paternal aunt Tziporrah, who was days from giving birth when she was suffocated on Yom Kippur.

United Nations, please dispense with this meaningless memorial. Against a backdrop of horrific human-rights abuses in many countries and terrorism aimed at Jews and other innocents, your platform is laser-focused on Israel-bashing. You’ve even obliterated, via UNESCO, the historic link between the Jewish people and Judaism’s most sacred sites.

But your shameful Resolution 2334, with the Obama administration as your enabler, was the most chilling for me as I reflect on the sheer enormity of my family’s Holocaust experiences.  You dodged inconvenient truths, such as Palestinians’ continued attacks on Israel, but excoriated the Jewish state alone as a “major obstacle” to peace. Your premise that Jews cannot live on land envisioned for a Palestinian state establishes that such an entity must be Judenrein.

It is trademark targeting we Jews are intimately familiar with.

And by calling upon “all States”… “to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967,” you have empowered Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions activists, who already are raising their volume with what they call “legal justification” to battle legislation aimed at preventing economic boycotts of Israel.

This reeks of the same brand of anti-Semitism my father described as having witnessed in his native pre-Holocaust Poland: “The physical struggle against the Jews will be illegal, but the economic struggle will be encouraged – that was the official policy of the government. Jews were squeezed out of their economic position wherever it was possible.” Boycotts were a license to harass Jews, and a gateway to their mass murder.

Seven decades after Auschwitz-Birkenau became a cemetery for a million Jews whose blood left a permanent stain on humanity, anti-Semitism has proliferated and often masquerades as criticism of Israel.  A German court in January reportedly upheld a lower court’s ruling that three men convicted of [torching a synagogue](http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/German-court-calls-synagogue-torching-an-act-to-criticize-Israel-478330) were motivated by criticism of Israeli policies, not anti-Semitism.

And Jews on college campuses are being verbally and physically attacked, with a dearth of safe spaces to protect them or their views. “Burn the Jews” was written in my neighborhood schools during a rash of anti-Semitic incidents that persists. City officials initially didn’t even report these hate crimes and then framed them as an inclusiveness issue. Meanwhile, students have joked openly about pizzas, as opposed to Jews, not crying when they are shoved into ovens.

United Nations, you are a poor role model for any course correction.  So spare me the theatrics and the empty gestures. I don’t need your disingenuous sympathy for one day a year while you isolate and demonize Jews during the rest. I, for one, prefer to save my tears for a more genuine commemoration.