**U.N. Allows Qaddafi Associates to Attend Durban III**

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The U.N. has quietly released the list of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that will be allowed to attend its “anti-racism” conference on September 22, 2011 in New York. All NGOs that requested credentials to attend the so-called “Durban III” conference were granted permission, except for four groups. Excluded are organizations from Denmark and Nepal that represent the Dalits (sometimes referred to as “outcasts” or “untouchables”), one little-known group dealing with human rights in Iraq, and the Swiss-based U.N. Watch, despite its close relations to the Obama administration and its support for U.S. membership on the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The U.N. General Assembly decided on June 13 that participation by NGOs in Durban III would be subject to the approval of every U.N. state – that is, approval from member states “on a no-objection basis.” This policy gave the likes of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and all other intolerant and xenophobic nations decision making power to decide which organizations count as genuinely “active in the field of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance” – the theoretical criteria for approval. The U.N. has not released the name (or names) of the countries that objected to these four NGOs.

NGOs that passed the “no objection” hurdle, and are now accredited to attend Durban III, include “North South XXI” – an organization closely linked to Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi. In fact, according to the website of the “Al-Qaddafi International Prize for Human Rights,” the North South organization is its primary associate. At U.N. Human Rights Council sessions, North South representatives generally spend their time attempting to tie Israel to “racism,” “genocide,” and “extermination.” Another “anti-racism” NGO approved by the U.N. for participation in Durban III is the Mouvement contre le racism et pour l’amitié entre les peuples (MRAP). MRAP use their U.N. speeches to accuse Israel of “ethnic cleansing and apartheid.”

The list of 88 NGOs that are permitted to attend is much smaller than many U.N. global conferences. By comparison, hundreds and even thousands of NGOs have been accredited to attend U.N. women’s and child rights conferences. The veto power was not the main reason for the low number of NGOs attending; instead, many organizations very active in the fight against racism are profoundly disillusioned by the Durban agenda and are doubtful of U.N. bona fides.

Many Jewish organizations, which have annual U.N. passes and accreditation to the U.N. generally, decided to boycott Durban III in solidarity with Israel, the United States, Canada, and other countries that have already pulled out of the conference. These states believe the event will be a dangerous charade. After all, Durban III, according to the General Assembly itself, is specifically intended to “commemorate” the 10th anniversary of the notorious anti-Semitic hate fest that took place in South Africa in 2001.

Some NGOs also objected to the U.N. accreditation process for Durban III, which required NGOs to affirm their commitment to following-up the Durban Declaration. Applicants were required to respond to an item titled, “Concrete activities my organization been involved with in follow-up to the recommendations of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action include.”

The Durban Declaration charges only Israel – one country among all 192 U.N. members – with racism and declares the Palestinians as “victims” of Israeli racism. The formula was intended to reincarnate the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution that declared Zionism, the self-determination of the Jewish people, to be a form of racism. Led by Holocaust survivor Congressman Tom Lantos, the United States and Israel walked out of the first Durban conference in disgust. So far ten countries, including the United States, have decided to boycott Durban III.

Participating countries will also be required to sign on to a new political declaration that will adopted at the conclusion of the conference on September 22. The terms of this new declaration were decided in backdoor meetings last Thursday and include the commitment to “reaffirm…the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration.”

With the involvement of a select group of NGOs that include organizations working to encourage racism—rather than defeat it—Durban III has become an unmitigated travesty. The U.N.’s game of continuing to use Israel as a diversionary tactic – demonizing the Jewish state, while ignoring real victims around the world – has been exposed. World leaders who are serious about human rights, but who are still considering attending the conference, have some serious soul searching to do.