UN Hall Filled to the Brim for Anti-BDS Conference

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More than 2,000 students, pro-Israel activists, diplomats, and Jewish leaders participated in the world's largest international anti-BDS conference on Tuesday.

The conference, put together at the initiative of Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Dannon, was titled "Ambassadors Against BDS." It was put on by the Israeli delegation to the UN and pro-Israel organizations from all over the world.

The conference opened with the singing of the Israeli national anthem "Hatikvah," included speeches from high ranking officials from all over the world, and even a performance by reggae artist Matisyahu.

Ambassador Danon called on those in attendance to unite in the fight against the BDS movement. "The truth is that this (unity) is the most effective weapon against BDS," Danon said. "BDS is modern anti-Semitism, and we must unite as one body in order to expose its true face and put an end to it."

World Jewish Congress President Ron Lauder also spoke at the event. He said "I wonder if those who support the boycott against Israel understand the real meaning behind this movement. These activists are calling for the destruction of the state of Israel. Don't be mistaken – the BDS movement doesn't support the Palestinian people. This campaign is intended to de-legitimize Israel – it is an effort to deny the Jewish people the right of self determination."

Vice President of the Israeli Supreme Court Elyakim Rubinstein gave an extensive review of the international legal battle against the movement.

"As we read every year in the Passover Haggadah during the Passover meal, 'in every generation they rise up against us.' The BDS movement is a part of those who wish to destroy us. Yet their mission will not be fulfilled. Just as we overcame the Arab boycott, so too will we overcome the BDS movement."

Matisyahu, a musician who was at the center of public outcry after BDS activists requested that he be [barred from performing at a music festival in Spain](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4691872,00.html), gave a special performance to those at the conference, singing his hit song "Jerusalem," which has turned into an anthem of sorts against the BDS movement.

Ambassador Danon further noted that this conference would not be a one time affair.

"From this lectern in the parliament of nations, we must continue to work – we must change the reality on campuses, in courthouses, and here at the UN. We will not let the forces of hate to demonize Israel. Together, we will overcome the BDS movement.”

Separately, Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour dismissed the conference as "no big deal."

He dismissed the conference as "an admission by the Israeli leadership that they're losing ground at American universities and colleges to BDS."

He added that BDS is not on the agenda of the UN.

"Is (Danon) suggesting to bring it to the agenda of the UN? If he is, bring it on," Mansour said.