[Stop funding UN agencies that welcome the PLO](https://nypost.com/2018/07/19/stop-funding-un-agencies-that-welcome-the-plo/)

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Last month, two UN agencies, whose membership is limited to sovereign countries, gave a “member state” seat to the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Under a law passed with overwhelming and bipartisan support in Congress over two decades ago, that means these UN bodies can no longer get taxpayer funding.

Yet US contributions continue — along with money to two other UN organizations the Palestinians joined in recent years.

Continuing to pay a total of $40 million a year for these agencies flouts US law and undermines American credibility. Ambassador [Nikki Haley has been commendably pressing for UN reform](https://nypost.com/2018/06/20/leaving-the-un-human-rights-council-was-the-moral-choice/), but Turtle Bay may sneer at such demands if the US isn’t even following its own legally mandated restrictions. Moreover, it encourages the Palestinian Authority to continue its campaign of “internationalizing” the conflict.

The law bars any congressionally appropriated money from going to UN agencies that accept the PLO as a “member state.” It seeks to deter the PLO from using the UN, where it enjoys an automatic majority of support, to purport to confer upon it the status of a sovereign state that, in turn, would be used by the Palestinians to present Israel with a diplomatic fait accompli, and completely remove any pressure on the Palestinians to make any compromises.

Once the Palestinians join such organizations, they hijack their agendas, and turn these organizations, already heavily biased against Israel, into platforms for nakedly anti-Semitic agendas.

That’s certainly the story of the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization, which the PA joined in 2011. “We need the issue of the state of Palestine to be resolved in the UN system,” Palestinian UN envoy Riyad Mansour said at the time, making his motives plain. Since then, the organization has passed resolutions denying any Jewish connection to Jerusalem, Hebron and other biblical holy sites. President Barack Obama was forced, unhappily, to stop sending taxpayer dollars to the bureaucracy.

But since then, the Palestinians have joined four other UN agencies — and no defunding has ensued. In 2016, they joined the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which administers the Paris Climate Accords and other environmental agreements.

Of course, Obama was loath to defund UNFCCC, having just sought to commit the US to joining the Paris accords. So Foggy Bottom used the fog of the UN’s weird organizational chart to avoid the plain meaning of the law.

Under the relevant statutes, defunding applies to UN “subsidiary organizations” and “affiliated entities.” The former refers to a defined list of 14 agencies directly integrated into the UN bureaucracy. The latter term refers to the sprawling network of interconnected but unaccountable bureaucracies that constitute what Turtle Bay calls “the UN system.”

A [new report by the Kohelet Policy Forum](https://en.kohelet.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/KPF085_Mandatory-Defunding-Under-US-Law_NewText_030718_ELECTRONIC.pdf), a Jerusalem think tank, shows that all these organizations are “UN affiliates” by any reasonable definition, including the definition the State Department uses regarding other statutes dealing with the UN.

Obama’s State Department refused to apply the defunding law to UNFCCC, claiming it was “a treaty” rather than an organization. That’s ridiculous: As with the UN itself, UNFCCC is both a treaty and a bureaucracy created by the treaty. And the US Treasury doesn’t make checks out to treaties; it makes them to organizations, with bank accounts.

Indeed, the UNFCCC Secretariat consists of 500 workers based in a UN office building in Bonn, Germany. Only in the weird world of the UN would count as just a “treaty.”

Obama’s failure to enforce the statutes produced a predictable effect — it eliminated US deterrence, and encouraged the Palestinians to seek, and obtain, membership in more UN organizations: another climate body, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons.

Congress made the law non-waivable for good reason. It understood there would always be a lobby against pulling the plug on UN agencies. After Trump’s decision to quit the Paris climate deal, any policy arguments for continuing to fund UNFCCC seem thin. But some are concerned that cutting America’s contribution would look bad. Who wants to be soft on chemical weapons?

That’s a question that should be directed at Ramallah and the OPCW — they knew full well what US law requires in such a circumstance and flouted it anyway. The countries that urged Abbas to pursue its UN-membership blitz should be the ones that pick up the tab — $18 million a year, a drop in the bucket by European foreign-aid standards.

And there are other ways to promote these goals without running the money through UN organizations. If preventing chemical weapons in Syria is the goal, America’s savings from defunding The Hague-based OPCW could be better used to give the Israeli Air Force a credit on its next F-35.