



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

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Statement by H.E. Aharon Leshno Yaar
Permanent Representative of Israel
To the United Nations, Geneva

General Segment Statement
Human Rights Council
4 March 2009

Mr. President.

If we were to look back to the year 1945, we would see an international community collectively shocked, horrified, and outraged by the atrocities of the Holocaust. Millions suffered from World War II and it took a traumatic toll on the psyche of the world. In response, and in a resounding collective echo around the world, we all declared "Never again" to the darker side of humankind.

The spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, conceived from that moment of collective realization, has shone as a beacon for those without hope, for those who had lost faith in humanity. The drafters of the Declaration knew that freedom one day would transcend oppression and tyranny, that men and women were all created equal, and that freedom from fear and freedom from want were all part of the equation in the greater formula of life.

The creation of the Human Rights Council was supposed to be our contribution to the good of humanity. We sought to create a human rights body that healed the rifts and imperfections of its predecessor. Yet, we have grossly and undeniably failed.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council has been used by many to settle old grievances, to align themselves with hate and cast out those that have a genuine desire to realize

fundamental rights and freedoms for all – while hiding under the guise of human rights saviors riding to free the oppressed. When, in fact, many of those countries throwing the first stone are some of the worst human rights offenders this world holds.

Israel has *in good faith* participated in Human Rights Council sessions. The automatic majority casts its hate on us, ignoring thematic issues and extreme human rights abuses that are killing, raping, torturing, and starving, millions of innocent people – each person as important as the next – only to single out Israel time and time again for criticism.

Let me remind you, anti-Semitism has many forms, and the resurgence of government supported anti-Semitism in politics, international affairs, and society against Jews and the State of Israel has no place in this world, let alone in this Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

Iran's approach to Israel two days ago in this very forum was anti-Semitism in its ugliest form. The Iranian Foreign Minister abused the floor given by this Council to defame Israel through hate speech.

I will not waste the time you have given me by detailing Iran's extensive violations of human rights against its own people. I will only say this, Iran is a known source of

terror that fosters anti-Semitism in the hopes the world will overlook its flagrant support of terror and applaud its efforts.

Mutaki's appearance in front of this Council will truly be remembered as one of the lowest points of this human rights forum.

Mr. President,

Many of you will agree that the Durban review conference was hijacked by the most extreme suppressers of human rights. Durban II continues to perpetuate the mistakes of Durban I, and still singles out one country, region, and conflict for criticism and condemnation. Israel will continue to shun the entire review process until it truly reflects a conference against racism in all forms and those involved refuse to be another medium in the promotion of anti-Israeli sentiments.

Mr. President,

Israel cannot claim to have all the answers, but we can confidently state it's time to *begin* appropriately fulfilling our obligations as the Human Rights Council. We need to

Convene special sessions for human rights atrocities in Iran, Sri Lanka, and Darfur;
Make sure thematic human rights issues receive the attention they need and deserve;
and

Ensure the Universal Period Review process really reviews the human rights record of each country, rather than countries relying on their friends and allies to secure the entire list of speakers before each session.

Mr. President,

Let's begin by never failing again.

Thank you.