



terrorism
Israel

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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Professor Bayefsky describes Israel: “It has about seven million citizens of whom a fifth are Arab. The government is vibrantly democratic; its press wide open, and religious freedom fully respected. Women have equal rights, and gays live openly,” but informs us that the U.N. has singled Israel out for being, “...an especially egregious offender of the organization’s mandate to preserve and enhance human freedom and tolerance.” Why do you think this is the case? Aren’t most other countries much worse in terms of human rights? Why do you think that Israel is singled out?
- We learn that the U.N. Human Rights Council, “...has a permanent agenda that governs every regular session. This agenda is composed of ten items, one of which is always reserved for criticizing Israel.” Why do you think that this is the case, especially considering the human rights abuses regularly occurring in countries such as North Korea, Saudi Arabia, China, Somalia, etc... ? Doesn’t this reflect insidious corruption, bias, and outright anti-Semitism? Why or why not?
- Professor Bayefsky points out that, “In 1949, when the UN admitted Israel as a member state, the UN had 58 member countries and a clear democratic and pro-Western orientation. Today the UN has 193 member countries, most of which are not even free.” How do you think this happened? Why do you think this happened? Currently, Iran – with a government that has publicly declared its intention to destroy another nation (Israel, in this case) – sits on the Human Rights council. Doesn’t this fact end the ‘choice’ that Professor Bayefsky describes in favor of determining that, “...there’s something very wrong with the United Nations that you should know about?” Why or why not?
- Professor Bayefsky teaches us that, “Among its many negative changes, the UN changed the principle of “self-determination” from a post-World War II, post-Holocaust human rights principle to a tool to wield against the West, especially against Israel.” Why do you think this is the case? What specific factors do you think contributed to such a wholesale change in interpretation of the ideology?
- Professor Bayefsky ends the video by stating, “There’s only one country in the world whose very legitimacy is questioned, only one country that is openly threatened with annihilation. That country is Israel. And what has the United Nations done about it? Worse than nothing. It has itself become a global platform for anti-Semitism and the destruction of the Jewish state.” Do you agree with Professor Bayefsky’s assertion? Why or why not? How much do you think the U.N.’s current attitude towards Israel is due to the Palestinian conflict? Considering that the Palestinians hurl rockets at Israel constantly, yet Israel calls the cellphones of civilians beforehand to warn them to leave before Israel destroys a rocket launcher that was attacking it, should Israel be so harshly criticized for human rights transgressions? Shouldn’t the Palestinians be held to the same standard and be held just as culpable, if not more so? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: North Korea

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article, ““North Korea: Security Council Should Maintain Focus on Rights,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What did the human rights groups request in a letter to the U.N. Security Council? What did 11 of the 15 council members support in a procedural vote?
- What do you think he was referring to, exactly, when Mr. Singh stated, “After so many years of darkness, the council must keep the spotlight on North Korea’s deplorable human rights record.” What do you think the U.N. will do next? Do you think that the U.N. should switch its focus on Israel’s supposed human rights transgressions to the very real ones in North Korea? Why or why not?
- How do you think Israel’s human rights record compares to that of North Korea? Considering the facts, the truth, and that a, “...UN-mandated commission of inquiry (COI) found that the nature, scale, and gravity of the long-standing and ongoing systematic and widespread violations of human rights violations in North Korea ‘reveal a state that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world,’” do you think that Israel should still be singled out by the U.N. Human Rights commission? Why or why not?



QUIZ

IS THE UN FAIR TO ISRAEL?

1. Between 2006 and 2012, the UN Human Rights Council released ____ reports condemning Israel.
 - a. 9
 - b. 5
 - c. 48
 - d. 3

2. The modern state of Israel was established in:
 - a. 1945
 - b. 1967
 - c. 1948
 - d. 1973

3. When the United Nations accepted Israel as a member state, it had:
 - a. A socialist agenda.
 - b. A pro-Arab orientation.
 - c. 193 member states.
 - d. A clear and democratic, pro-Western orientation.

4. The UN has changed _____ from a post-Holocaust human rights principle into a tool to wield against Israel.
 - a. Self annihilation
 - b. Self determination
 - c. Self respect
 - d. Self actualization

5. According to Anne Bayefsky, what has the United Nations become a platform for?
 - a. International aid and generosity.
 - b. Protecting Israel's right to exist.
 - c. Anti-Semitism and the destruction of the Jewish state.
 - d. Anti-nationalism and the deconstruction of borders.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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October 29, 2015

North Korea: Security Council Should Maintain Focus on Rights

Council Should Hold Another Formal Meeting Before Year's End

(New York) – The UN Security Council should hold another formal session to reiterate that North Korea's abysmal human rights record remains a priority for the international community, nine human rights groups said today in a [letter](#) to UN Security Council members. The groups also stressed the importance of keeping the session open to the public and the media.

In December 2014, the UN Security Council added the situation in [the Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#) to its formal agenda. The addition followed a procedural vote where 11 of the council's 15 members supported characterizing the widespread human rights violations in the country as a threat to international peace and security. In February 2014, a UN-mandated commission of inquiry (COI) found that the nature, scale, and gravity of the long-standing and ongoing systematic and widespread violations of human rights violations in North Korea "reveal a state that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world."

"Last year, the UN Security Council gave victims hope that the international community was willing to challenge the decades-long status quo of mass human suffering in North Korea," said [Param-Preet Singh](#), senior counsel in Human Rights Watch's international

justice program. “Another formal session would signal the Council’s growing impatience with Pyongyang’s deplorable policies that have led to crimes against humanity.”

The UN General Assembly is currently finalizing a resolution on the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea which, among other things, encourages the UN Security Council to continue its discussion of the country’s human rights record. The resolution also calls on the council to consider referral of the situation in North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC), consistent with the COI’s recommendations. Since North Korea is not a party to the Rome Statute, the ICC’s founding treaty, only the UN Security Council can refer the situation in North Korea to the ICC.

In recent reports to the UN General Assembly, the UN special rapporteur on the human rights situation in North Korea and the UN secretary-general confirmed that the human rights situation remains dire. Both officials also stressed the importance of holding those responsible for grave abuses to account.

“The UN Security Council should speak up for North Korea’s countless victims given Pyongyang’s ongoing refusal to change its destructive policies,” said Singh. “After so many years of darkness, the council must keep the spotlight on North Korea’s deplorable human rights record.”