



IS THE UN FAIR TO ISRAEL?

ANNE BAYEFSKY

There are 193 countries in the United Nations today. Of these, one has been singled out as an especially egregious offender of the organization's mandate to preserve and enhance human freedom and tolerance. Can you guess which it is?

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.

The answer is Israel.

Here are some facts:

38% of all the resolutions of the United Nations Human Rights Council - the UN's top human rights body - that are critical of specific countries have been directed at Israel alone. The 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.

Between 2006 -- when the council was created -- and 2012, it published 48 reports condemning Israel. During that same period, there were nine reports on Syria's mass killings and torture of its own citizens, three on Iran's genocide-threatening regime, and not one on, for example, China - which denies more than a billion people elementary freedoms.

I could go on, but I think you get the idea.

So we are faced with a choice. Either there's something very wrong with Israel that I'm not telling you about or there's something very wrong with the United Nations that you should know about.

Let's look into the history of both.

First Israel.

Ever since its establishment (voted for by the United Nations, by the way) in 1948, Israel has had to fight its neighbors solely in order to survive.

It has endured innumerable acts of terrorism, the most intense from 2000-2005, the so-called Second Intifada in which children and other innocents were blown up in places like pizza parlors, and buses and at weddings. It still suffers from rocket attacks against civilians

from the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by a terror group, Hamas, whose stated reason for existence is to destroy Israel.

Israel has developed a strong military and a web of security fences and walls to protect itself. Do these security measures cause hardships to people who must deal with this network? Yes, they do. Israel would like nothing better than to tear all these fences and walls down. But bitter experience informs them it to what would happen if it did.

Is Israel a perfect country? Of course not. But it is one of the freest and most open societies in the world.

That's Israel history.

Here's the UN's.

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.

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.

This reached its fullest expression at the notorious Durban Conference, held in South Africa in 2001. The Durban Conference was billed as a UN world conference against racism and intolerance, but it turned into an orgy of anti-Israel and anti-Jew propaganda.

Of all the bad actors in the world, the final Durban Declaration found one state guilty of racial discrimination – you guessed it, Israel. The Durban Declaration, however, remains to this day the centerpiece of the UN's allegedly anti-racism agenda.

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.

I'm Anne Bayefsky director of the Touro Human Rights Institute for Prager University.